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COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Wes Hayes and Members, SC Commission on Higher Education

From: Chair Charles Munns, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

**Annual Report on Admission Standards for
First-Time Entering Freshmen, Fall 2018**

Background

In 1988, in response to Act 629, the Commission on Higher Education began to report data related to first time entering freshmen for each South Carolina public institution. The act, *The Cutting Edge*, required the Commission to monitor the admission standards at the public colleges and universities to comply as follows:

- In consultation and coordination with the public institutions of higher learning in this state, the State Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that minimal admission standards are maintained by the institutions.
- The Commission, with the institutions, shall monitor the effect of compliance with admission prerequisites that are effective in fall, 1988 (Section 59-104-10[A]).

In addition, in Act 359 of 1996, Section 59-103-45(3), the General Assembly reiterated the importance of the Commission reporting admission standards. For purposes of this report, the following data is reviewed: freshmen applications, acceptances, and enrollment; minimum admission requirements set by individual institutions; mean SAT and ACT scores for freshmen classes; college preparatory course prerequisites compliance; and, information on provisional students.

Findings

The attached *Annual Report on Admission Standards for First-Time Entering Freshman, Fall 2018* provides findings from data reported by 12 South Carolina public senior colleges and universities regarding admission standards. In Fall 2018, the public senior institutions admitting freshmen in South Carolina received 113,120 applications from individuals, both in-state and out-of-state, seeking admission as first-time freshmen. Of the first-time freshmen applicants, 62.1 percent (70,278) were offered admission, and 28.4 percent (19,980) of applicants offered admission accepted and enrolled. A slight increase in the number of applicants and those offered admission resulted in an increase of 501 enrollees from 2017 to 2018. This is a one and one-half percent decrease among the applicants offered admission, but a one-half percent increase among those that accepted and enrolled from Fall 2017. The majority of first-time freshmen attending South Carolina's 12 public senior institutions, in Fall 2018, are women (57.4 percent) and the Black/African American men and women composition of first-time freshmen remained relatively unchanged at 16.2 percent.

The number and percentage of applicable first-time freshmen meeting all the college preparatory course prerequisites rebounded modestly, after a slight decline from 2015 – 2017. In Fall 2018, 85.6 percent of first-time freshmen met all the prerequisites compared to 85.1 percent in 2017, and 88.7 percent in 2016. Data indicates that among the public senior institutions, the percentage of freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites slightly increased from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. Slightly more than Fall 2017, over half of the public institutions demonstrate decreases in freshmen who met high school course prerequisites in Fall 2018, while the remaining indicate an increase in freshmen who met high school course prerequisites. Retention rates among students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites remain lower for over half of the public senior institutions. Five institutions indicate an increase in freshmen-to-sophomore retention rates for students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites, while seven institutions demonstrate a decrease in retention rates for the same category of students.

Slightly more students attending South Carolina public senior institutions report taking the SAT (9,486 students) rather than the ACT (9,218 students) as a college entrance examination in Fall 2018, largely as a result of revisions to state college readiness exam administration policy. This is the first edition of the *Annual Report on Admission Standards* to include standalone ACT scores. In Fall 2018, the average ACT mean is 24.8. Half of the public senior institutions indicate an increase in the average ACT mean from 2017 to 2018. The average combined SAT mean is 1176. All but two public senior institutions indicate an increase in the average combined SAT mean.

An institution may offer two types of admission to a degree-seeking student, regular or provisional. The classification is based on whether the applicant meets the institution's minimum admission criteria. Among the public senior institutions, seven of the twelve indicated admitting "provisional" students, yet all have first-time freshmen not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites. Most of the institutions reporting provisional students, again, were comprehensive teaching colleges and universities in South Carolina. Although the data indicate that the percentage of provisional students admitted to the comprehensive sector continues to fluctuate at several institutions, the levels for nearly all public senior institutions remain below the 15 percent threshold CHE formally recommended at a commission meeting in August 1997.

Institutions continue to adjust admission requirements for first-time entering freshmen. The required minimum SAT and ACT scores are, generally, lower for students with a higher GPA and high school class rank at most institutions. The minimum admission standards of the public senior institutions in South

Carolina for Fall 2018 incorporate the use of both GPA and high school class rank. Institutions report intent to apply a variety of methods: both GPA and class rank, no minimum scores, the same minimum scores regardless of high school class rank, or regardless of GPA. In addition to SAT/ACT scores, class rank, and GPA, considerations to include the SAT essay component as an admission requirement are constantly changing. SC public senior institutions no longer consider the essay component of the SAT in admission decisions.

Structure and Methods

The Annual Report on the 2018 admission standards compliance for first-time entering freshmen at South Carolina public senior institutions is presented in five segments, including application and enrollment demographics, college preparatory course prerequisites, SAT/ACT scores, provisionally admitted students, and minimum admission standards. The report relies on the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS) as the primary data source for information presented.

Parts II-IV and the enrollment data included in Part I are collected through CHEMIS, and self-reported by each institution. Institutions report the data to the Commission no later than November 1 of each academic year. The institutions provide the data for Part V through a separate questionnaire with topic-specific queries. Data verification, generally, occurs between the Commission and the institutions through September of the following academic year.

At the June 9, 2020 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP), staff presented findings and the Committee voted in favor of the report. At the July 9, 2020 meeting of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL), staff presented findings. The Committee inquired about undergraduate international student enrollment, and discussed in-state/out-of-state ratios and enrollment costs. CAAL then agreed to continue to assess available data, and upon remaining discussion voted in favor of the report.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing favorably commends the report to the Commission.

ANNUAL REPORT ON ADMISSION STANDARDS FOR FIRST-TIME ENTERING FRESHMEN, FALL 2018 SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SENIOR INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

The Annual Report on the 2018 admission standards compliance for first-time entering freshmen at South Carolina public senior institutions is presented in five segments:

- [Part I: Fall 2018 Applications, Acceptances, Enrollments, and Demographics](#)
- [Part II: Fall 2018 Data Related to High School Course Prerequisites](#)
- [Part III: Fall 2018 SAT and ACT Scores](#)
- [Part IV: Fall 2018 Provisionally Admitted Students](#)
- [Part V: Fall 2019 Minimum Admission Standards](#)

The report relies on the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS) as the primary data source for information presented. Parts II - IV and the enrollment data included in Part I are collected through CHEMIS and self-reported by each institution. Institutions report the data to the Commission no later than November 1 of each academic year. The institutions provide the data for Part V through a separate questionnaire with topic-specific queries. Data verification, generally, occurs between the Commission and the institutions through September of the following academic year.

In accordance with the Commission's commitment to access, affordability, and excellence for South Carolina's post-secondary students, this report details new student access in that it demonstrates efforts to collaborate with South Carolina institutions to expand postsecondary education opportunities for residents, in-state and out-of-state, through the dissemination of information about institutional admission requirements and outcomes.

Part I: Fall 2018 Applications, Acceptances, Enrollments, and Demographics

South Carolina has 13 public senior institutions: 1) The Citadel; 2) Clemson University; 3) Coastal Carolina University; 4) College of Charleston; 5) Francis Marion University; 6) Lander University; 7) Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC); 8) South Carolina State University; University of South Carolina (USC) in 9) Columbia, 10) Aiken, 11) Beaufort, and 12) Upstate; and 13) Winthrop University. Three of the public senior institutions, Clemson, MUSC, and USC Columbia, are research institutions. However, MUSC only offers undergraduate programs that begin through articulation agreements in the junior year, and thus does not admit freshmen students. As a result, MUSC is not included in the annual report on admission standards.

In Fall 2018, South Carolina's 12 public senior colleges and universities admitting freshmen received 113,120 applications from individuals seeking admission as first-time freshmen. **Table 1** (p. 5) presents the number and percentage of students who applied and accepted and enrolled at each public senior institution. Of the first-time freshmen applicants, 70,278 (62.1 percent) were offered admission. Of those offered admission, 19,980 (28.4 percent) applicants accepted admission and enrolled. This is two percent less than the 2017 national average of 30.4 percent of 18 – 24 years-old first-time freshmen enrolled in 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions, which decreased 0.7 percent from 2016

to 2017 (McFarland et al., 2019). Overall, among the public senior institutions, a **decrease** of approximately one and one-half percent occurred for applicants offered admission (62.1 percent), and an **increase** of approximately one-half percent occurred for those accepted and enrolled (28.4 percent) in Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). The slight increase in the number of applicants and those offered admission also increased the total number of applicants who accepted and enrolled by 501 students from 2017 to 2018.

Table 1 Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018					
Institution	Number of Applications¹	Number of Applicants Offered Admission¹	Percent of Applicants Offered Admission	Number Accepted and Enrolled	Percent Accepted and Enrolled
Research Institutions					
Clemson	28,845	13,613	47.2%	3,789	27.8%
USC Columbia	30,778	19,648	63.8%	5,854	29.8%
Total	59,623	33,261	55.8%	9,643	29.0%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities					
The Citadel	2,672	2,159	80.8%	703	32.6%
Coastal Carolina	14,057	9,777	69.6%	2,329	23.8%
College of Charleston	11,675	9,254	79.3%	2,199	23.8%
Francis Marion	4,226	2,635	62.4%	731	27.7%
Lander	5,452	2,318	42.5%	870	37.5%
SC State	3,415	1,818	53.2%	541	29.8%
USC Aiken	2,077	1,587	76.4%	549	34.6%
USC Beaufort	1,481	1,236	83.5%	413	33.4%
USC Upstate	3,252	2,746	84.4%	1,011	36.8%
Winthrop	5,190	3,487	67.2%	991	28.4%
Total	53,497	37,017	69.2%	10,337	27.9%
Grand Total	113,120	70,278	62.1%	19,980	28.4%

¹ Reported by the institutions.

The University of South Carolina Upstate, as shown in Table 1, offered admission to the largest percentage of applicants in Fall 2018, 84.4 percent, followed by the University of South Carolina Beaufort (83.5 percent). This is an increase of 27.1 percent for USC Upstate and 19.3 percent increase for USC Beaufort from Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). In 2017, The Citadel offered admission to the largest percentage of applicants, 81.1 percent, but decreased 0.3 percent to 80.8 in Fall 2018 (CHE, 2019a). South Carolina State University, in 2016 (86.2 percent) and 2015 (94.9 percent), offered admission to the largest percentage of applicants (CHE 2018a and 2018b). However, the percentage of applicants offered admission at South Carolina State decreased 25.1 percent from 2017 to 2018 (CHE, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). Two institutions, College of Charleston and USC Aiken, offered admission to 70 - 80 percent of applicants. This is one less institution than in Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). Four institutions, USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, Francis Marion, and Winthrop offered admission to 60 - 69 percent of applicants. One institution, (South Carolina State, offered admission to 50 - 59 percent of applicants. As in 2015 and 2016, Lander offered admission to the lowest percentage of applicants (42.5 percent), a decline of 18.8 percent, followed by Clemson holding steady at 47.2 percent (CHE, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a).

A comparison of data from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 indicates the percentage of students accepted and enrolled **increased** for four institutions: The Citadel (0.5 percent), Coastal Carolina (2.8 percent), College of Charleston (4.5 percent), and Lander (9.0 percent) (CHE, 2019a) but **decreased** at the remaining public senior institutions. Winthrop experienced the largest decrease in the percentage of students accepted and enrolled (-2.9 percent) followed by USC Upstate (-2.8 percent) and Francis Marion (-2.5 percent). Lander had the largest percentage of students accept and enroll (37.5 percent). USC Upstate followed with 36.8 percent of the applicants offered admission, accepted and enrolled. The percentage of accepted and enrolled students for South Carolina State University remained approximately the same as in 2017. Less than half of the public senior institutions, five, met and exceeded the national average of 30.4 percent for students accepted and enrolled among those offered admission (McFarland et al., 2019). This is one institution less than in Fall 2017.

Of the institutions that reduced the gap between applicants admitted and those that accepted and enrolled, Lander (5.0 percent) and South Carolina State (23.5 percent) had the lowest percentage. However, the gap increased for half of institutions. The largest difference between applicants offered admission and those that accepted and enrolled occurred at College of Charleston (55.5 percent). USC Beaufort followed with 50.0 percent. The College of Charleston experienced a decrease in the percentage of applicants offered admission and ranked the same in Fall 2017, but USC Beaufort had a 19.2 percent increase in the percentage of applicants offered admission and a similar percentage of those that accepted and enrolled (CHE, 2019a). USC Upstate experienced the largest shift in the difference between applicants offered admission and those that accepted and enrolled from 2017 to 2018 (an increase of 29.9 percent) (CHE, 2019a). Although the percentage of those offered admission at USC Upstate increased by over 27 percent, the percentage of students that accepted and enrolled decreased by 2.8 percent.

Table 2 provides a five-year overview of applications, acceptances, and enrollments. The number of applicants increased by 18,385 over the last five years, and the number enrolled increased by 1,548 students. Until Fall 2018, the percentage of applicants accepted and enrolled consistently declined. A **decrease** of 2.6 percent occurred from 2014 to 2017, followed by a 0.6 percent increase from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. Yet, the percentage is still below the national average (30.4 percent) (McFarland et al., 2019).

Table 2 Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments, Five Year Comparison S.C. Public Senior Institutions					
Year	Number of Applications	Number of Applicants Offered Admission	Percent of Applicants Offered Admission	Number Accepted and Enrolled	Percent Accepted and Enrolled
2014	94,735	60,373	63.7%	18,432	30.5%
2015	101,553	63,296	62.3%	18,703	29.5%
2016	102,267	65,588	64.1%	19,035	29.0%
2017	109,747	69,834	63.6%	19,479	27.9%
2018	113,120	70,278	62.1%	19,980	28.4%

Demographics

The majority of first-time freshmen attending South Carolina's 12 public senior institutions, in Fall 2018, are women (57.4 percent). This **remained relatively unchanged** from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 (CHE, 2019a). The U.S. Department of Education (2019a) reported similar percentages in Fall 2017 with women representing 56.7 percent of undergraduate students on college campuses, and projected 56.6 percent for Fall 2018. Regarding minority enrollment, the Black/African American men and women composition of first-time freshmen **remained relatively unchanged** at 16.2 percent with the highest percentage at South Carolina State University (93.5 percent) (**Table 2A**, p. 11 - 12). As in Fall 2017, USC Upstate, Francis Marion, and Winthrop University follow with 44.3 percent, 37.8 percent, and 32.9 percent for the number of Black/African American first-time freshmen, respectively. An increase occurred for both USC Upstate (1.9 percent) and Winthrop (0.7 percent), the largest increase at USC Upstate. However, the percent of Black/African American first-time freshmen at Francis Marion decreased for the second consecutive year (-0.9 percent and -3.4 percent in 2017 and 2018, respectively). Lander experienced the highest increase at 2.6 percent, although not among the institutions with the highest percentage of Black/African American first-time freshmen. Yet, state percentages are higher than the national data. The Black/African American population represented 13.6 percent of U.S. residents in degree-granting postsecondary institutions for the Fall 2017 enrollment with 13.9 percent projected for Fall 2018 (U.S. Department of Education, 2019b).

Continuing the pattern over the past two years, the majority of first-time freshmen attend Clemson (19.0 percent) or USC Columbia (29.3 percent) (CHE, 2018b and 2019a). However, contrary to Fall 2017, USC experienced a decrease in first-time freshmen of 0.9 percent, while Clemson's first-time freshmen enrollment increased (0.3 percent). Coastal Carolina (11.6 percent) and College of Charleston (11.0 percent) still follow. Coastal Carolina's percentage of first-time freshmen slightly decreased (0.7 percent). College of Charleston experienced an increase of 1.5 percent in first-time freshmen.

In-state students account for 62.5 percent of first-time freshmen enrolled in Fall 2018 at SC public senior institutions (**Table 2B**, p. 13 – 14). This is an **increase** of 0.8 percent after experiencing a slight decline from 2016 to 2017 (CHE, 2018b, 2019a). All but three institutions (South Carolina State, USC Aiken, and Winthrop) experienced an increase in the number of in-state students in Fall 2018. Of the 37.5 percent out-of-state students attending college in South Carolina as first-time freshmen, the majority are from North Carolina (5.2 percent), Virginia (3.5 percent), New Jersey (3.4 percent), and Georgia (3.4 percent), **remaining relatively unchanged** from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. North Carolina and Georgia experienced a slight decrease of 0.4 percent and 0.3 percent, respectively (CHE, 2019a). The number of first-time freshmen from Maryland follows at approximately 3.0 percent, a decrease of 0.3 percent from Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). As in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017, the majority of out-of-state first-time freshmen attend Clemson (20.1 percent) or USC Columbia (37.8 percent) followed by Coastal Carolina (17.4 percent) and College of Charleston (14.0 percent) in Fall 2018.

Coastal Carolina was the only SC public senior institution with more out-of-state than in-state first-time freshmen students in Fall 2018 at 55.7 percent. The percentage of out-of-state students fell between 49 – 45 percent for three institutions (USC Columbia, The Citadel, and College of Charleston) and the percentage of out-of-state first-time freshmen attending Clemson was nearly 40 percent. For the remaining institutions, out-of-state students comprised less than 20 percent of first-time freshmen with Lander having the lowest percentage at approximately 6.0 percent. Overall, the percentage of out-of-state first-time freshmen has remained less than 40 percent in South Carolina from 2016 to 2018 with an average of 37.8 percent.

Within the state of South Carolina, Greenville (6.1 percent), Richland (6.0 percent), Charleston (5.2 percent), Lexington (4.5 percent), and York (4.3 percent) remained the top five counties that comprise in-state first-time freshmen in 2018 (**Table 2C**, p. 15 - 16). Greenville experienced a slight decrease (0.2 percent) in the number of first-time freshmen attending college in South Carolina. However, the percentage for Richland (0.1 percent), Charleston (0.1 percent), and Lexington (0.2 percent) slightly increased. The number of first-time freshmen from York county remained steady at 4.3 percent.

Nationally, as overall college enrollments continue to decline, the growth of out-of-state enrollments have been a trending topic amidst increasing competition for students and tuition revenue coupled with a reduction in state appropriations, igniting policy debates across the country (Lounsbury & Datubo-Brown, 2019; Marcus, 2017; National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019; Smith, 2016). In 2017, similar interest arose among members of the South Carolina General Assembly and Commission leadership considering rising tuition costs and tuition abatements for out-of-state undergraduate students (Full Commission, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; South Carolina Legislature, 2017). Specifically, there was concern about whether out-of-state students displaced in-state students. Last year, in review of the *Annual Report on Admission Standards for First-Time Entering Freshman, Fall 2017*, the Commission's Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL) requested additional information from five SC public senior institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, and College of Charleston) regarding the in-state vs. out-of-state distribution of the cohort. The questions focused on 1) the desired ratio of in-state/out-of-state admissions in Fall 2017, 2) ratio trends in recent years and projections, 3) whether the current ratios are the consequence of previous policies, and 4) any adverse effects of the ratio (Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing [CAAL], 2019a).

In response, each institution reiterated a commitment to prioritizing the recruitment and retention of in-state students and asserted no SC resident had been displaced by a non-resident applicant; but also explained higher tuition costs and out-of-state student enrollment as alternative ways to generate revenue due to decreases in state funding (CAAL, 2019b). Institutions also argue that increasing enrollment of out-of-state students combats the negative, long-term demographic trend of decreases in high school graduates pursuing post-secondary education (Smith, 2016). Fortunately for South Carolina, high school completers have been on a steady incline since the 2014 academic year, averaging 46,648 students between 2014 and 2018 (SCDE, 2014a, 2014b, 2016a, 2016b 2017, 2018, 2019). South Carolina had 49,201 students completed high school during the 2017 - 2018 academic year (SCDE, 2019). The majority of SC high school completers, 69.5 percent, pursue post-secondary education and 88.7 percent of completers entering post-secondary education attended an in-state college. A significant percentage of high school completers pursued employment (16.5 percent) or the military (4 percent) after graduation. However, 9.5 percent (4,578 students) were categorized as pursuing "other activities". Institutions may want to consider employing enrollment strategies that connect with candidates who have been traditionally overlooked for college, including high school students that have elected to go directly into work or the service. The current state of higher education demonstrates that business as usual may not lead to sustainability for institutions.

National data validates that first-time freshmen are more likely to attend college in their home states and South Carolina is no exception. SREB reports that in Fall 2016, 86.3 percent of first-time freshmen in South Carolina were in-state students (Lounsbury & Datubo-Brown, 2019). Although on the decline over the previous decade from 88.6 percent, it exceeded the national average of approximately 82 percent, then and now. In addition, the import/export ratio for SC was 2.02. In other words, two first-time freshmen from other states enroll in a SC college for every one first-time freshmen from South Carolina.

Supporters of out-of-state enrollment view import/export ratios above one as a positive attribute. Often from the lens of the state institutions, out-of-state enrollment revenue enables the acceptance of more in-state students because of its higher per capita tuition rate (Smith, 2016; The University of South Carolina System, n.d.). Institutions also assert that out-of-state students boost local and state economies. USC Columbia reported a \$41 million annual economic impact in the Midlands due to out-of-state visitors and that 60 percent of USC graduates remain in South Carolina meeting the needs of the workforce (Pastides, 2017). On the other hand, institutions maintain that the increase in enrollment of out-of-state students is a consequence of a reduction in state funding due to budgetary shortfalls, along with facing decisions to either raise tuition or risk compromising students' educational experiences.

Although spending on higher education is a very small share of the total federal budget, it is the third largest category in state budgets (The Pew Charitable Trusts [PEW], 2019). However, since the 2008 recession, state appropriation levels declined and have yet to recover. As a result, there is a mounting critique of state government. Jaquette (2017) names state disinvestment, which in turn results in tuition increases, as one of the primary causes of declining access and enrollment. South Carolina reduced state spending per student for higher education by nearly 34 percent between 2008 and 2017, the seventh highest decrease among all states (Mitchell et al., 2017). The total amount and mix of revenue used for public higher education also varies across states (Jaquette, 2017; PEW, 2019).

PEW (2019) explains public institutions rely on federal revenue; state revenue; local revenue; net tuition and fees; private gifts, investment returns, and endowment income; self-supporting operations; and other monies as major funding sources. The brief further highlights that "federal funding variation stems from differences in students' financial needs and in the types of research conducted in each state, among other factors, while the range in state funding is due, in part, to policy choices". For example, net tuition and fees amounted to 33 percent (\$10,268) of the composition of revenue per full-time equivalent (FTE) student in South Carolina for fiscal year 2017 (\$30,707) compared to 21 percent (\$6,514) for state revenue (PEW, 2019). In comparison, North Carolina requires the cost to attend public institutions to be as close to free as possible. As a result, North Carolina public institutions, with a total revenue composition of \$35,121 per FTE student, receive \$12,518 in state revenue (36 percent) and \$5,948 in net tuition revenue (17 percent). Several other member states in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) receive more state revenue than net tuition revenue. All the remaining SREB states, except for Louisiana and Delaware, receive more state revenue and less net tuition revenue than South Carolina. Ideally, the higher the amount of state revenue, the less contribution required of students and their families. Among SREB states, public institutions in ten states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas) receive more state revenue than net tuition revenue as a composition of revenue per full-time equivalent student.

However, more recent debates hold public flagship universities to a higher standard. Opponents contend state universities were established to serve the residents of their states and are the "engines of social mobility for high achieving, low-income students" through access and affordability (Smith, 2016; Jaquette, 2017). The trend of increasing out-of-state enrollment is believed to have negatively impacted the attendance of in-state students, more particularly low-income and minority students. The belief is that out-of-state students "crowd out" in-state students, preventing them from enrolling in the state university of their choice. In exchange, some public flagship universities may accept more affluent, but lower performing, out-of-state students that make up the shortfall from state governments and fund "resort-like" amenities while utilizing merit aid as a recruitment tool. Despite the external factors, many public universities continue to experience an increase in the actual number of in-state students.

Jaquette (2017) maintains the “responsibility of public university to serve state residents depends on the responsibility of the state to fund its public universities and vice-versa” (p. 20). Increases in state appropriations and funding models that meet enrollment needs to sufficiently fund public flagship universities and “subsidize the cost of educating moderate and low-income students” are recommended as possible solutions to the dilemma. Across states, the response to out-of-state enrollment growth of states and public institutions has varied (Jaquette, 2017). The pendulum swings from passing legislation that caps system-wide out-of-state enrollment to removing caps altogether. In addition, higher education is not designated as a constitutional right in any state (Smith, 2016). This higher barometer for public flagship universities also proved true in South Carolina as USC Columbia was the only institution requested to testify in a public Senate hearing (South Carolina Legislature, 2017).

As a participant in local deliberations about out-of-state enrollment, the former President at USC Columbia asserted at legislative hearings that out-of-state students do not displace qualified SC applicants, and aligned with common perspective that out-of-state students supplement the education of SC residents and assist in meeting the economic demands of the state (Pastides, 2017). Recommendations to improve the affordability of higher education in SC included 1) establishing baseline funding for research, comprehensive, and regional institutions based on full-time equivalent; 2) developing a fair funding formula that prioritizes retention and graduation in high demand career fields with recurring funding; and 3) creating a state funded need-based aid program.

Under previous recovery conditions in South Carolina and other states since the 2008 recession, a more in-depth study comparing the characteristics of in-state and out-of-state students on variables such as demographics, grants and scholarships, financial aid, tuition rates, academic achievement, majors, retention, and completion would be required to shed light on the impact of out-of-state enrollment on the higher education landscape. However, the economic impact of the 2019 novel coronavirus intensifies the need for data and analysis to inform responsive and real-time higher education strategies and policies that protect opportunities for all students to enroll, study, and graduate better prepared for life and work. The need in any state for economic development through a trained and educated workforce has been challenged already by historic job loss, wage loss, closed businesses, and industry contractions. At its May 14, 2020 meeting, the Commission’s Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing adopted *The Sense of Committee with regard to COVID-19*, which stipulated that “Education, PK-12 and higher education, are essential to South Carolina’s recovery,” but that “health and economic uncertainty remains the forecast for now and the foreseeable future.” In response to conditions, South Carolina institutions are adapting policies and procedures for admissions, grading, aid eligibility, instruction, and budget management that best serve students and the state, and sustain institutions and their relationships with local partners and communities.

Table 2A
Enrollment by Race and Gender
S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018

	Hispanic/ Latino				American Indian / Alaskan Native				Asian				Black/African American				Grand Total
	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	
Research Institutions																	
Clemson	140	153	293	7.7%	4	6	10	0.3%	54	46	100	2.6%	98	143	241	6.4%	3,789
USC Columbia	118	152	270	4.6%	10	3	13	0.2%	95	105	200	3.4%	138	219	357	6.1%	5,854
Total	258	305	563	5.8%	14	9	23	0.2%	149	151	300	3.1%	236	362	598	6.2%	9,643
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities																	
The Citadel	51	11	62	8.8%	2	0	2	0.3%	8	1	9	1.3%	45	8	53	7.5%	703
Coastal Carolina	60	83	143	6.1%	3	6	9	0.4%	10	11	21	0.9%	209	196	405	17.4%	2,329
College of Charleston	41	93	134	6.1%	2	6	8	0.4%	7	35	42	1.9%	48	109	157	7.1%	2,199
Francis Marion	4	15	19	2.6%	2	2	4	0.5%	2	9	11	1.5%	93	183	276	37.8%	731
Lander	7	16	23	2.6%	1	1	2	0.2%	2	3	5	0.6%	56	199	255	29.3%	870
South Carolina State	0	1	1	0.2%		1	1	0.2%	0	0	0	0.0%	245	261	506	93.5%	541
USC Aiken	15	18	33	6.0%	0	3	3	0.5%	0	4	4	0.7%	41	99	140	25.5%	549
USC Beaufort	9	19	28	6.8%	1	0	1	0.2%	2	4	6	1.5%	28	54	82	19.9%	413
USC Upstate	27	41	68	6.7%	0	2	2	0.2%	9	9	18	1.8%	103	345	448	44.3%	1,011
Winthrop	13	54	67	6.8%	0	4	4	0.4%	4	9	13	1.3%	96	230	326	32.9%	991
Total	227	351	578	5.6%	11	25	36	0.3%	44	85	129	1.2%	964	1,684	2,648	25.6%	10,337
Grand Total	485	656	1,141	5.7%	25	34	59	0.3%	193	236	429	2.1%	1,200	2,046	3,246	16.2%	19,980

Table 2A Enrollment by Race and Gender S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018																	
	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Is.				White				Two or More Races				Other (Non- Resident Alien and Unknown)				Grand Total
	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	Men	Women	Total	Percent of Total	
Research Institutions																	
Clemson	1	0	1	0.0%	1,367	1,563	2,930	77.3%	95	93	188	5.0%	16	10	26	0.7%	3,789
USC Columbia	3	2	5	0.1%	2,186	2,495	4,681	80.0%	118	130	248	4.2%	44	36	80	1.4%	5,854
Total	4	2	6	0.1%	3,553	4,058	7,611	78.9%	213	223	436	4.5%	60	46	106	1.1%	9,643
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities																	
The Citadel	1	0	1	0.1%	475	52	527	75.0%	33	4	37	5.3%	10	2	12	1.7%	703
Coastal Carolina	1	2	3	0.1%	693	856	1,549	66.5%	46	66	112	4.8%	46	41	87	3.7%	2,329
College of Charleston	1	2	3	0.1%	517	1,225	1,742	79.2%	27	60	87	4.0%	12	14	26	1.2%	2,199
Francis Marion	0	0	0	0.0%	129	252	381	52.1%	7	17	24	3.3%	7	9	16	2.2%	731
Lander	1	0	1	0.1%	152	369	521	59.9%	13	25	38	4.4%	10	15	25	2.9%	870
South Carolina State	0	1	1	0.2%	8	3	11	2.0%	0	0	0	0.0%	8	13	21	3.9%	541
USC Aiken	0	0	0	0.0%	124	200	324	59.0%	8	17	25	4.6%	10	10	20	3.6%	549
USC Beaufort	0	0	0	0.0%	81	185	266	64.4%	9	11	20	4.8%	5	5	10	2.4%	413
USC Upstate	0	0	0	0.0%	139	249	388	38.4%	17	45	62	6.1%	9	16	25	2.5%	1,011
Winthrop	1	0	1	0.1%	154	372	526	53.1%	19	28	47	4.7%	7	0	7	0.7%	991
Total	5	5	10	0.1%	2,472	3,763	6,235	60.3%	179	273	452	4.4%	124	125	249	2.4%	10,337
Grand Total	9	7	16	0.1%	6,025	7,821	13,846	69.3%	392	496	888	4.4%	184	171	355	1.8%	19,980

Table 2B
Enrollment by State of Origin
S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018

State of Origin	Clemson	USC Columbia	The Citadel	Coastal Carolina	College of Charleston	Francis Marion	Lander	SC State	USC Aiken	USC Beaufort	USC Upstate	Winthrop	State Total	State Percent of Total
Alabama	23	3	5	4	11	2	0	0	1	1	3	1	54	0.27%
Alaska	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.01%
Arizona	3	3	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	0.07%
Arkansas	4	1	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0.08%
California	34	23	7	4	23	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	96	0.48%
Colorado	12	6	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	0.17%
Connecticut	51	72	2	62	72	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	267	1.34%
Delaware	8	22	1	9	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	54	0.27%
District of Columbia	5	4	0	1	11	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	31	0.16%
Florida	70	61	40	16	41	2	9	8	4	7	9	8	275	1.38%
Georgia	180	270	37	38	62	3	11	24	18	24	9	3	679	3.40%
Hawaii	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.01%
Idaho	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1		0	1	7	0.04%
Illinois	0	1	0		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.01%
Indiana	55	124	13	29	30	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	256	1.28%
Iowa	5	7	4	10	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	35	0.18%
Kansas	2	2	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	0.05%
Kentucky	1	1		1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.03%
Louisiana	11	32	4	11	13	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	74	0.37%
Maine	6	6	2	3	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	0.14%
Maryland	4	2	0	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0.10%
Massachusetts	66	271	5	156	77	0	0	9	2	1	2	7	596	2.98%
Michigan	79	118	10	93	63	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	368	1.84%
Minnesota	14	15	5	13	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	53	0.27%
Mississippi	8	8	2	9	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	35	0.18%
Missouri	3	2		1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0.06%
Montana	13	16	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0.20%
Nebraska	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.01%
Nevada	2	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0.05%

Table 2B
Enrollment by State of Origin
S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018

State of Origin	Clemson	USC Columbia	The Citadel	Coastal Carolina	College of Charleston	Francis Marion	Lander	SC State	USC Aiken	USC Beaufort	USC Upstate	Winthrop	State Total	State Percent of Total
New Hampshire	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0.02%
New Jersey	10	8	0	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	0.25%
New Mexico	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.02%
New York	88	175	13	104	74	1	2	2	1	1	2	6	469	2.35%
North Carolina	202	508	44	107	92	15	9	11	4	8	10	27	1,037	5.19%
North Dakota	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.01%
Ohio	38	97	13	42	22	0	0	1	1	5	2	3	224	1.12%
Oklahoma	1	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	0.04%
Oregon	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.02%
Pennsylvania	75	214	10	156	70	0	1	6	1	2	1	2	538	2.69%
Puerto Rico	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Rhode Island	5	7	3	8	21	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	45	0.23%
South Carolina	2,284	3,011	378	1,032	1,151	683	818	450	490	343	940	899	12,479	62.46%
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Tennessee	46	76	8	17	22	2	1	3	2	0	1	1	179	0.90%
Texas	55	26	21	10	16	0	1	1	3	1	1	0	135	0.68%
Utah	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.01%
Vermont	1	0	2	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0.08%
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Virginia	115	314	30	141	76	4	1	4	1	0	1	7	694	3.47%
Washington	8	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	0.09%
West Virginia	5	5	2	9	5	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	29	0.15%
Wisconsin	6	8	1	10	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	30	0.15%
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01%
APO (Foreign Service)	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.02%
Foreign Countries	22	53	9	32	20	17	11	4	13	7	15	8	211	1.06%
Unknown	3	27	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	9	0	45	0.23%
Grand Total	3,789	5,854	703	2,329	2,199	731	870	541	549	413	1,011	991	19,980	100.00%
Institution Percent of Total	18.96%	29.30%	3.52%	11.66%	11.01%	3.66%	4.35%	2.71%	2.75%	2.07%	5.06%	4.96%	100.00%	

Table 2C
First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by County
S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018

County	Clemson	USC Columbia	The Citadel	Coastal Carolina	College of Charleston	Francis Marion	Lander	SC State	USC Aiken	USC Beaufort	USC Upstate	Winthrop	County Total	County Percent of Total
Abbeville	4	8	2	1	3	0	23	2	5	0	1	1	50	0.25%
Aiken	57	75	12	14	35	4	42	11	245	8	11	17	531	2.66%
Allendale	4	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	3	1	0	1	15	0.08%
Anderson	131	62	11	13	30	2	71	9	2	5	17	16	369	1.85%
Bamberg	5	5	0	6	1	1	3	8	7	5	0	1	42	0.21%
Barnwell	3	4	3	2	0	1	6	6	11	2	1	3	42	0.21%
Beaufort	77	85	12	23	58	9	12	5	3	100	7	22	413	2.07%
Berkeley	78	125	29	28	73	28	28	20	10	22	23	55	519	2.60%
Calhoun	3	9	1	0	0	1	0	6	4	2	3	0	29	0.15%
Charleston	205	328	55	59	196	17	20	36	7	29	27	66	1,045	5.23%
Cherokee	16	20	1	7	11	1	7	0	1	1	31	11	107	0.54%
Chester	12	12	3	7	2	4	9	5	0	1	7	10	72	0.36%
Chesterfield	11	22	2	8	2	26	11	3	2	0	2	5	94	0.47%
Clarendon	9	13	2	4	1	12	1	13	0	1	0	0	58	0.29%
Colleton	9	10	1	6	3	4	1	6	2	17	3	5	67	0.34%
Darlington	20	30	3	11	8	48	7	14	2	0	4	7	154	0.77%
Dillon	7	7	2	10	4	45	0	7	0	0	5	0	87	0.44%
Dorchester	90	123	28	25	80	13	24	25	5	14	17	43	487	2.44%
Edgefield	16	12	1	2	4	0	12	2	27	0	1	5	82	0.41%
Fairfield	4	8	0	6	2	6	5	4	0	1	12	4	52	0.26%
Florence	41	64	11	41	21	214	13	27	4	1	6	19	462	2.31%
Georgetown	18	44	2	53	26	17	7	4	0	2	7	15	195	0.98%
Greenville	383	343	42	39	104	6	80	23	5	3	128	71	1,227	6.14%
Greenwood	34	33	8	5	7	2	76	0	6	1	9	2	183	0.92%
Hampton	8	9	0	3	3	4	1	3	8	9	2	0	50	0.25%
Horry	93	157	19	335	87	37	9	9	2	4	15	27	794	3.97%
Jasper	1	4	1	1	0	2	4	6	2	11	1	0	33	0.17%
Kershaw	30	44	4	19	20	14	10	4	6	2	5	18	176	0.88%
Lancaster	33	45	4	21	14	8	9	7	0	6	13	22	182	0.91%
Laurens	25	22	3	5	6	1	22	2	0	0	9	7	102	0.51%

Table 2C
First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by County
S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2018

County	Clemson	USC Columbia	The Citadel	Coastal Carolina	College of Charleston	Francis Marion	Lander	SC State	USC Aiken	USC Beaufort	USC Upstate	Winthrop	County Total	County Percent of Total
Lee	10	0	0	3	2	8	2	4	0	0	0	0	29	0.15%
Lexington	130	348	25	31	83	10	81	11	56	26	36	69	906	4.53%
McCormick	4	0	1	2	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	3	15	0.08%
Marion	5	10	0	9	1	26	2	6	0	0	0	6	65	0.33%
Marlboro	3	6	0	9	4	16	0	5	0	0	5	2	50	0.25%
Newberry	11	11	1	7	6	2	19	4	1	1	5	7	75	0.38%
Oconee	37	16	2	6	9	3	9	0	0	0	3	5	90	0.45%
Orangeburg	17	22	9	18	10	4	14	40	15	6	17	14	186	0.93%
Pickens	83	23	5	4	17	0	16	1	0	0	9	9	167	0.84%
Richland	178	438	34	73	74	23	49	61	40	20	106	92	1,188	5.95%
Saluda	5	2	0	0	5	0	13	1	4	2	1	2	35	0.18%
Spartanburg	145	124	9	20	47	4	48	5	0	6	306	54	768	3.84%
Sumter	33	40	12	21	10	29	5	12	3	3	10	36	214	1.07%
Union	2	11	1	1	0	0	5	1	0	0	13	2	36	0.18%
Williamsburg	5	6	0	18	0	16	4	7	0	3	5	6	70	0.35%
York	189	231	17	54	82	14	31	22	1	28	55	139	863	4.32%
Out-Of-State	1	2,763	316	1,265	1,025	31	43	87	45	61	47	84	5,768	28.87%
Foreign	3	53	9	32	20	17	11	4	13	7	15	8	192	0.96%
Unknown	1,501	27	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	2	9	0	1,544	7.73%
Institution Total	3,789	5,854	703	2,329	2,199	731	870	541	549	413	1,011	991	19,980	100.00%
Institution Percent of Total	18.96%	29.30%	3.52%	11.66%	11.01%	3.66%	4.35%	2.71%	2.75%	2.07%	5.06%	4.96%	100.00%	

Part II: Fall 2018 Data Related to College Preparatory Course Prerequisites

Since Fall 1988, public senior institutions in South Carolina require that applicants complete certain high school courses prior to entering college. The Commission reviews, vets, and updates the list of course prerequisites to ensure alignment with minimal institution requirements. The following table details the college preparatory course prerequisites implemented in Fall 2011, and valid through Fall 2018 (CHE 2006, 2012). The requirements for first-time freshmen beginning in Fall 2019 were revised, approved, and distributed to the South Carolina Department of Education and made available to the public in Spring 2015 (CHE, 2015). The next revision cycle is scheduled to begin in Fall 2020.

<i>College Preparatory Course Prerequisites 2011</i>
Four (4) Units of English: At least two units must have strong grammar and composition components, at least one must be in English literature, and at least one must be in American literature. Completion of College Preparatory English I, II, III, and IV will meet this criterion.
Four (4) Units of Mathematics: These include Algebra I (for which Applied Mathematics I and II may count together as a substitute, if a student successfully completes Algebra II), Algebra II, and Geometry. A fourth higher-level mathematics course should be selected from among Algebra III/trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, statistics, discrete mathematics, or a capstone mathematics course and should be taken during the senior year.
Three (3) Units of Laboratory Science: Two units must be taken in two different fields of the physical or life sciences and selected from among biology, chemistry, or physics. The third unit may be from the same field as one of the first two units (biology, chemistry, or physics) or from any laboratory science for which biology and/or chemistry is a prerequisite. Courses in earth science, general physical science, or introductory or general environmental science for which biology and/or chemistry is not a prerequisite will not meet this requirement. It is strongly recommended that students take physical science (taught as a laboratory science) as a prerequisite to the three required units of laboratory science outlined in this section. It is also strongly recommended that students desiring to pursue careers in science, mathematics, engineering or technology take one course in all three fields.
Two (2) Units of the same Foreign Language.
Three (3) Units of Social Science: One unit of U.S. History is required; a half unit of Economics and a half unit in Government are strongly recommended.
One (1) Unit of Elective: One unit must be taken as an elective. A college preparatory course in Computer Science (i.e., one involving significant programming content, not simply keyboarding) is strongly recommended for this elective. Other acceptable electives include college preparatory courses in English; fine arts; foreign languages; social science; humanities; laboratory science (excluding earth science, general physical science, general environmental science, and other introductory science courses for which biology and/or chemistry is not a prerequisite); or mathematics above the level of Algebra II.
One (1) Unit of Physical Education or ROTC.
One (1) Unit of Fine Arts: One unit in Appreciation of, History of, or Performance in one of the fine arts.

Each institution may also make exceptions in admitting 1) students who do not meet all of the prerequisites in cases where the failure to meet one or more prerequisites is due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student, or 2) students who have taken the Tech Prep (Applied Academics) courses rather than the required college preparatory curriculum described above and who meet all other institutional admission criteria (CHE 2006, 2015). Thus, some variation of admission requirements from one college to the next is normative. The College Board (n.d.) states, “there’s no magic formula when it comes to college admission decisions,” and that many factors influence admission.

Table 3 (p. 19) presents the number and percentage of applicable first-time freshmen meeting all the college preparatory course prerequisites, also referred to as compliance rate. The proportion of all applicable first-time freshmen meeting all the prerequisites was on a steady incline from 2013 to 2015 (CHE 2018a). After a decrease from 91.7 percent in 2012 to 85.3 percent in 2013, there was an increase to 85.4 percent in 2014, and a subsequent increase to 91.2 percent in 2015. However, in Fall 2016, the

percentage of students meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites decreased to 88.7 percent (CHE, 2018b). The decline continued with 85.1 percent of first-time freshmen meeting all the college preparatory course prerequisites in Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). The percentage of first-time freshmen meeting all the college preparatory course prerequisites rebounded, **slightly increasing** to 85.6 in Fall 2018. The rate continues to fall below the 1999 average of 98.15 percent. Of the public senior institutions, Francis Marion University is the only institution that came close to the 1999 average with 98.9 percent of students meeting the college course prerequisites in Fall 2018. College of Charleston experienced the next highest percentage of students meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites at 96.7 percent, followed by The Citadel and Coastal Carolina at 94.7 and 94.6 percent, respectively. Each institution, except for The Citadel, experiencing a slight decline from Fall 2017.

The prerequisites for first-time freshmen that do not meet the requirements are either waived or additional courses are required. In Fall 2018, 1,517 in-state students did not meet the requirements compared to 1,478 out-of-state students for the public senior institutions and USC two-year campuses. The number of students not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites **increased** for in-state first-time freshmen (3.3 percent increase) but **decreased** for out-of-state (5.2 percent decrease) first-time freshmen (**Tables 3A and 3B**, p. 22 - 23). This is a slight adjustment in the trends from Fall 2016 and 2017 in which both in-state and out-of-state first-time freshmen experienced an increase in the number of students not meeting prerequisites (CHE, 2018b, 2019a). All public senior institutions waived the prerequisites for students not meeting the requirements. This is contrary to Fall 2015, 2016, and 2017 in which Francis Marion was the only public senior institution that required students not meeting the prerequisites to take additional courses (CHE, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). For the third year in a row, the number of in-state students not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites is higher than out-of-state students for seven of the twelve public senior institutions (Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, USC Upstate, and Winthrop), and the same institutions as in Fall 2016 and 2017.

Table 3
Percent of Applicable¹ First-Time Freshmen Meeting College Preparatory Course Prerequisites

Institution	2015			2016			2017			2018			Percentage Diff. Comparing 2015 and 2018
	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	
Research Institutions													
Clemson	3,447	3,099	89.9%	3,684	3,290	89.3%	3,649	3,245	88.9%	3,789	3,463	91.4%	1.5%
USC Columbia	5,073	4,424	87.2%	5,040	4,147	82.3%	5,845	4,575	78.3%	5,801	4,578	78.9%	-8.3%
Total	8,520	7,523	88.3%	8,724	7,437	85.2%	9,494	7,820	82.4%	9,590	8,041	83.8%	-4.5%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities													
The Citadel	602	557	92.5%	734	678	92.4%	687	648	94.3%	702	665	94.7%	2.2%
Coastal Carolina	2,331	2,254	96.7%	2,211	2,130	96.3%	2,346	2,230	95.1%	2,294	2,170	94.6%	-2.1%
College of Charleston	2,226	2,182	98.0%	2,340	2,281	97.5%	1,832	1,776	96.9%	2,183	2,111	96.7%	-1.3%
Francis Marion	739	735	99.5%	729	686	94.1%	688	653	94.9%	731	723	98.9%	-0.6%
Lander	541	502	92.8%	600	556	92.7%	750	692	92.3%	859	785	91.4%	-1.4%
SC State	494	430	87.0%	628	600	95.5%	591	585	99.0%	541	511	94.5%	7.5%
USC Aiken	570	505	88.6%	598	518	86.6%	565	495	87.6%	536	453	84.5%	-4.1%
USC Beaufort	460	387	84.1%	475	363	76.4%	486	397	81.7%	406	318	78.3%	-5.8%
USC Upstate	779	697	89.5%	745	617	82.8%	871	741	85.1%	996	816	81.9%	-7.6%
Winthrop	1,081	1,004	92.9%	1,055	971	92.0%	1,039	933	89.8%	982	887	90.3%	-2.6%
Total	9,823	9,253	94.2%	10,115	9,400	92.9%	9,855	9,150	92.8%	10,230	9,439	92.3%	-1.9%
Total Senior Institutions	18,343	16,776	91.5%	18,839	16,837	89.4%	19,349	16,970	87.7%	19,820	17,480	88.2%	-3.3%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC²													
USC Lancaster	100	36	36.0%	277	147	53.1%	319	183	57.4%	322	206	64.0%	28.0%
USC Salkehatchie	0	0	0.0%	8	8	100.0%	235	1	0.4%	263	0	0.0%	0.0%
USC Sumter	0	0	0.0%	212	164	77.4%	264	166	62.9%	250	151	60.4%	60.4%
USC-Union	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	180	0	0.0%	177	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total USC Two-Year	100	36	36.0%	497	319	64.2%	998	350	35.1%	1,012	357	35.3%	-0.7%
Grand Total	18,443	16,812	91.2%	19,336	17,156	88.7%	20,347	17,320	85.1%	20,832	17,837	85.6%	-5.6%

¹ Not applicable to foreign students, GED students, and students who graduated prior to 1988.

² At the USC two-year campuses, the prerequisites are applicable to those students accepted and classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready.

Institutional Findings

The compliance rate is the percentage of applicable first-time freshmen meeting all the college preparatory course prerequisites. In 2018, English was the discipline in which first-time freshmen students showed the highest compliance rate at the institutions collectively, and Lab Science was the discipline with the lowest compliance rate. In addition, out-of-state students demonstrated a lower compliance rate than in-state first-time freshmen. As shown in **Table 3** (p. 19), for Fall 2018, eight public senior institutions (Clemson, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, and Winthrop), two more institutions than in 2017 and 2015, and one more than in 2016, indicate a compliance rate between 90 - 100 percent. Two public senior institutions (USC Aiken and USC Upstate) indicate a compliance rate between 80 – 90 percent, with two others below 80 percent, USC Beaufort and USC Columbia. Seven of the public institutions (Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate), one more institution than in Fall 2017, indicate a slight **decrease** in the compliance rate from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. The compliance rate for Clemson, USC Columbia, The Citadel, Francis Marion, and Winthrop **increased**. As previously mentioned, Francis Marion University has the highest compliance rate at 98.9 percent and the largest increase in compliance rate at 4.0 percent.

USC Beaufort rebounded from a compliance rate of 76.4 percent in 2016 to 81.7 percent in 2017, though 78.3 percent in Fall 2018. However, for 2018 USC Beaufort's overall retention rate increased slightly (**Table 3C**, p. 26). Data reveals the areas with the highest rates of first-time freshmen not satisfying college preparatory prerequisites were Fine Arts (25.7 percent) followed by Lab Science (20.0 percent), Math (19.3 percent), and English (11.4 percent), respectively. In 2017, the majority of first-time freshmen at USC Beaufort lacking requirements was, again, in Fine Arts (23.3 percent). In addition, in-state students at USC Beaufort accounted for the majority of first-time freshmen students not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites (72.9 percent) in Fall 2018, but this is 1.8 percent less than in Fall 2017. Historically, among first-time freshmen not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites, fewer out-of-state students attending USC Beaufort do not meet the college preparatory course prerequisites than in-state students (CHE, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a).

However, USC Columbia closely followed USC Beaufort with a compliance rate of 78.9 percent, a slight increase (0.6 percent) from 2017. Data reveals the areas with the highest rates of first-time freshmen at USC Columbia not satisfying college preparatory prerequisites were Fine Arts (62.9 percent) followed by English (13.1 percent), Lab Science (9.9 percent), and Physical Education (5.0 percent), respectively. In 2016 and 2017, the majority of first-time freshmen at USC Columbia lacking requirements was, again, in Fine Arts (62.2 percent and 70.4 percent, respectively). In addition, as in 2016 and 2017, out-of-state students at USC Columbia continue to account for the majority of first-time freshmen students not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites (76.4 percent) in Fall 2018, but this is 1.4 percent less than in Fall 2017 and trending downward. Opposite of the trend with USC Beaufort, more out-of-state students attending USC Columbia do not meet the college preparatory course prerequisites than in-state students (CHE, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a).

Fine Arts was the primary area in which prerequisites were not met for public senior institutions reporting a lower compliance rate in Fall 2017. However, Lab Science emerged as the primary area in which prerequisites were not met for three of the seven public senior institutions reporting a lower compliance rate (Lander, South Carolina State, and USC Aiken) in Fall 2018. The primary area in which prerequisites were not met at Coastal Carolina and College of Charleston is Foreign Language (33.1 percent and 46.7 percent, respectively). Fine Arts is the primary area in which prerequisites were not

met for USC Beaufort (25.7 percent). For USC Upstate, Math is the primary area in which prerequisite are not met (23.8 percent). However, Lab Science and Foreign Language appeared as the most common areas in which prerequisites were not met for the institutions with lower compliance.

Previous reports indicate the rate of compliance among “out-of-state” students contributed to a lower overall compliance rate (CHE 2012, 2014, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). Important to note is that admission requirements vary from one college to the next within and across state lines, suggesting a higher compliance rate among in-state students is expected since the South Carolina prerequisites are disseminated to the South Carolina K-12 system as a college preparatory resource. In Fall 2018 data, out-of-state students continue to represent a higher percentage of first-time freshmen not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites. **Table 3A** (p. 22) and **Table 3B** (p. 23) represent the number of applicable first-time freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites “In-State” and “Out-of-State”, respectively. A comparison between the last column of both Table 3A and Table 3B in Fall 2018 indicates the compliance rate of first-time in-state freshmen is higher than for out-of-state freshmen for all but two public senior institution, Coastal Carolina and South Carolina State University. The compliance rate for out-of-state first-time freshmen attending both Coastal Carolina and South Carolina State University is approximately the same as in-state students.

Overall, the compliance rate among in-state first-time freshmen (92.7 percent) remained the same, but slightly increased (1 percent) for out-of-state students (80.5 percent). The amount of the decrease in compliance remains larger among out-of-state students, ranging from 0.1 percent to 33.3 percent, with USC Aiken, an Augusta, GA-area state border institution, demonstrating the largest percentage. Therefore, the decrease in compliance reported in **Table 3** is likely attributed to out-of-state students as a result of larger decreases from previous years (CHE 2012, 2014, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). Two institutions experienced a decrease in the compliance rate among both in-state and out-of-state students in Fall 2017, compared to three institutions (Lander, South Carolina State, and USC Aiken) in 2018 (CHE, 2019a). All three institutions were among those institutions with a decrease in compliance rate among both in-state and out-of-state students in Fall 2016 but were not among the two institutions in Fall 2017. Clemson, Francis Marion, and Winthrop are the only institutions to experience an increase in the compliance rate among both in-state and out-of-state students in Fall 2018, one more institution than in Fall 2017.

Six senior public institutions (Clemson, Coastal Carolina, Francis Marion, USC Beaufort, USC Upstate, and Winthrop), two more than in Fall 2017, increased the compliance rate among out-of-state students in 2018. This is the second consecutive year of an increase in the compliance rate among out-of-state students for Francis Marion and USC Beaufort. Six senior public institutions report a compliance rate for out-of-state students below the average of 80.5 percent for all institutions, ranging from 48.2 percent to 69.0 percent. This is a slight improvement in compliance among out-of-state students from the Fall 2017 rate, in which the lowest compliance was 46.0 percent, and the second consecutive year of improvement. However, among the seven public senior institutions with an overall lower compliance rate in Fall 2018 compared to Fall 2017 (Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate), out-of-state students accounted for the majority of first-time freshmen not meeting the prerequisites, with the exception of South Carolina State University.

Table 3A
Percent of Applicable¹ First-Time Freshmen Meeting College Preparatory Course Prerequisites (In-State)

Institution	2015			2016			2017			2018			Percentage Diff. Comparing 2015 and 2018
	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	
Research Institutions													
Clemson	2,100	1,993	94.9%	2,282	2,118	92.8%	2,133	1,999	93.7%	2,284	2,180	95.4%	0.5%
USC Columbia	2,552	2,444	95.8%	2,389	2,244	93.9%	2,849	2,555	89.7%	3,011	2,726	90.5%	-5.3%
Total	4,652	4,437	95.4%	4,671	4,362	93.4%	4,982	4,554	91.4%	5,295	4,906	92.7%	-2.7%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities													
The Citadel	311	303	97.4%	401	382	95.3%	381	371	97.4%	378	372	98.4%	1.0%
Coastal Carolina	939	917	97.7%	980	950	96.9%	1,048	1,017	97.0%	1,028	973	94.6%	-3.1%
College of Charleston	1,245	1,234	99.1%	1,366	1,353	99.0%	1,026	1,009	98.3%	1,140	1,123	98.5%	-0.6%
Francis Marion	707	703	99.4%	686	652	95.0%	633	607	95.9%	683	676	99.0%	-0.4%
Lander	504	470	93.3%	563	523	92.9%	714	662	92.7%	816	751	92.0%	-1.3%
SC State	370	324	87.6%	517	493	95.4%	509	503	98.8%	450	425	94.4%	6.8%
USC Aiken	513	467	91.0%	528	471	89.2%	517	455	88.0%	490	430	87.8%	-3.2%
USC Beaufort	398	346	86.9%	393	326	83.0%	423	360	85.1%	343	280	81.6%	-5.3%
USC Upstate	746	672	90.1%	689	582	84.5%	824	719	87.3%	940	789	83.9%	-6.2%
Winthrop	992	949	95.7%	951	897	94.3%	937	863	92.1%	898	829	92.3%	-3.4%
Total	6,725	6,385	94.9%	7,074	6,629	93.7%	7,012	6,566	93.6%	7,166	6,648	92.8%	-2.1%
Total Senior Institutions	11,377	10,822	95.1%	11,745	10,991	93.6%	11,994	11,120	92.7%	12,461	11,554	92.7%	-2.4%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC²													
USC Lancaster	89	34	38.2%	269	144	53.5%	307	182	59.3%	315	203	64.4%	26.2%
USC Salkehatchie	0	0	0.0%	8	8	100.0%	221	1	0.5%	243	0	0.0%	0.0%
USC Sumter	0	0	0.0%	201	162	80.6%	233	157	67.4%	237	149	62.9%	62.9%
USC-Union	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	173	0	0.0%	167	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total USC Two-Year	89	34	38.2%	478	314	65.7%	934	340	36.4%	962	352	36.6%	-1.6%
Grand Total	11,466	10,856	94.7%	12,223	11,305	92.5%	12,928	11,460	88.6%	13,423	11,906	88.7%	-6.0%

¹ Not applicable to foreign students, GED students, and students who graduated prior to 1988.

² At the USC two-year campuses, the prerequisites are applicable to those students accepted and classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready.

Table 3B
Percent of Applicable¹ First-Time Freshmen Meeting College Preparatory Course Prerequisites (Out-of-State)

Institution	2015			2016			2017			2018			Percentage Diff. Comparing 2015 and 2018
	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	
Research Institutions													
Clemson	1,347	1,106	82.1%	1,402	1,172	83.6%	1,516	1,246	82.2%	1,505	1283	85.2%	3.1%
USC Columbia	2,521	1,980	78.5%	2,651	1,903	71.8%	2,996	2,020	67.4%	2,790	1852	66.4%	-12.1%
Total	3,868	3,086	79.8%	4,053	3,075	75.9%	4,512	3,266	72.4%	4,295	3,135	73.0%	-6.8%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities													
The Citadel	291	254	87.3%	333	296	88.9%	306	277	90.5%	324	293	90.4%	3.1%
Coastal Carolina	1392	1337	96.0%	1,231	1,180	95.9%	1,298	1,213	93.5%	1,266	1197	94.5%	-1.5%
College of Charleston	981	948	96.6%	974	928	95.3%	806	767	95.2%	1,043	988	94.7%	-1.9%
Francis Marion	32	32	100.0%	43	34	79.1%	55	46	83.6%	48	47	97.9%	-2.1%
Lander	37	32	86.5%	37	33	89.2%	36	30	83.3%	43	34	79.1%	-7.4%
SC State	124	106	85.5%	111	107	96.4%	82	82	100.0%	91	86	94.5%	9.0%
USC Aiken	57	38	66.7%	70	47	67.1%	48	40	83.3%	46	23	50.0%	-16.7%
USC Beaufort	62	41	66.1%	82	37	45.1%	63	37	58.7%	63	38	60.3%	-5.8%
USC Upstate	33	25	75.8%	56	35	62.5%	47	22	46.8%	56	27	48.2%	-27.6%
Winthrop	89	55	61.8%	104	74	71.2%	102	70	68.6%	84	58	69.0%	7.2%
Total	3,098	2,868	92.6%	3,041	2,771	91.1%	2,843	2,584	90.9%	3,064	2,791	91.1%	-1.5%
Total Senior Institutions	6,966	5,954	85.5%	7,094	5,846	82.4%	7,355	5,850	79.5%	7,359	5,926	80.5%	-5.0%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC²													
USC Lancaster	11	2	18.2%	8	3	37.5%	12	1	8.3%	7	3	42.9%	24.7%
USC Salkehatchie	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	14	0	0.0%	20	0	0.0%	0.0%
USC Sumter	0	0	0.0%	11	2	18.2%	31	9	29.0%	13	2	15.4%	15.4%
USC-Union	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%	10	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total USC Two-Year	11	2	18.2%	19	5	26.3%	64	10	15.6%	50	5	10.0%	-8.2%
Grand Total	6,977	5,956	85.4%	7,113	5,851	82.3%	7,419	5,860	79.0%	7,409	5,931	80.1%	-5.3%

¹ Not applicable to foreign students, GED students, and students who graduated prior to 1988.

² At the USC two-year campuses, the prerequisites are applicable to those students accepted and classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready.

Retention and Compliance

The *Annual Report on Admission Standards* also examines the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of first-time freshmen in relationship to the college preparatory course prerequisite compliance data for the last five years. Retention rate, reported by each institution, is “the rate at which entering freshmen in a fall semester enroll the following fall semester” at the same institution (The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems [NCHEMS], 2015). NCHEMS reported the Fall 2015 national retention rate was 79.8 percent and that it steadily increased since 2009. NCHEMS also reported the Fall 2015 retention rate for South Carolina was 76.6 percent. South Carolina retention rates usually fall below the national average but began to increase in 2012 (74.1 percent) after a slight decline in 2011 (73.7 percent) from a rate of 73.9 percent in 2010 and 75.0 percent in 2009. The Fall 2015 rate was also a slight decline from the Fall 2014 rate of 76.8 percent. The retention rates for Fall 2016 and Fall 2017, including disaggregation by state, were not accessible at the time of authorship of the *Annual Report on Admission Standards* for 2016 and 2017. As a result, the reports utilized the 2015 NCHEMS data for retention comparisons. The year of 2015 is the last year of retention data reported by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, specifically disaggregated by state.

Following 2015, *The Condition of Education*, published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) became the apparent primary resource for retention rates of undergraduate degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States. In recent reports, overall retention rate and retention rate by type of institution is reported, but state profiles are not provided. McFarland et al. (2018) reported an overall retention rate of 81 percent in Fall 2015 for first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who enrolled at four-year degree-granting institutions. The retention rate at public four-year institutions overall was the same. Both retention rates remained the same for first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students who enrolled in public four-year degree-granting institutions in Fall 2016 and in Fall 2017 (McFarland et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

Table 3C (p. 26) shows the overall retention rate and the retention rate of first-time freshmen who meet and who did not meet the recommended college preparatory course prerequisites for the South Carolina public senior institutions. The average retention rate among the 12 public senior institutions is 79.4 percent in Fall 2018, which is slightly below the overall national retention rate and the retention rate of public four-year degree-granting institutions in Fall 2017 NCES data, as well as slightly below the Fall 2017 rate of 80.0 percent highlighted in the *Annual Report on Admission Standards for First-Time Entering Freshmen, Fall 2017* (CHE, 2019a; U.S. Department of Education, 2020). The overall retention rate of the nine public senior institutions (Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, USC Upstate, and Winthrop) fell below both the 2016 overall national and public four-year degree-granting institutions retention rates (CHE, 2018b). This is one more institution than in Fall 2017. The same three institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, and The Citadel) exceeded the 2016 NCES retention rates in Fall 2018. Clemson, again, demonstrates the highest retention rate at 93.3 percent, followed by USC Columbia (87.0 percent) and The Citadel (83.4percent). South Carolina State University indicates the lowest retention rate at 61.1 percent.

The overall retention rate among the public senior institutions in South Carolina **slightly declined** from 80.0 percent in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 to 79.4 percent in Fall 2018 (CHE, 2018b, 2019a). Six institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion University, and USC Beaufort), two more than in Fall 2017, **increased** the overall retention rate of first-time freshmen from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. The other six institutions (The Citadel, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, USC Upstate, and Winthrop) indicate a **decrease** in retention rates from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. Three of the six institutions (The Citadel, USC Aiken, and Winthrop) experienced a decrease for both first-time

freshmen meeting and not meeting the college preparatory prerequisites. However, this is three fewer institutions than in Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a).

Consistent with previous data, first-time freshmen that meet the college preparatory course prerequisites are more likely to remain in college and transition to sophomore year compared to students who did not meet the requirements (CHE 2012, 2014, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, and 2019a). Seven of the 12 public senior institutions demonstrate a **decreased** retention rate for students who did not meet the college preparatory course requirements (USC Columbia, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and Winthrop). This is one less institution than in Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). The decrease in the retention rate for USC Columbia (-0.1 percent) was less than half a percent. The remaining five institutions (Clemson, Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, and USC Upstate) indicate an **increased** rate of retention for students who did not meet the high school course requirements.

Again, Lander (22.5 percent) demonstrated the widest range in retention between students who meet and do not meet the college preparatory requirements (CHE, 2019a). However, The Citadel (15.0 percent), Winthrop (12.7 percent), and Coastal Carolina (12.6 percent) followed. USC Columbia, for the second consecutive year, indicates the smallest difference at 0.7 percent, closing the gap in the retention rate between first-time freshmen that meet the college preparatory course prerequisites and students who did not meet the requirements by one (1.0) percent. Although still below the percentage of first-time freshmen who meet the college preparatory course requirements, two institutions experienced a large increase in the retention rate for students who did not meet the high school course requirements compared to Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). South Carolina State University increased the retention rate by 29.7 percent, followed by Lander University (12.0 percent).

Although it is expected for first-time freshmen meeting the college preparatory course requirements to have a higher retention rate than students not meeting the requirements, retention and increasing retention of all admitted students is the desired outcome. As in Fall 2017, five public senior institutions (Clemson, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, and Francis Marion) indicate an **increase** in the retention rate among students meeting the requirements from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 (CHE, 2019a). Clemson experienced an increase in retention rate among first-time freshmen meeting the college preparatory course requirements for the third consecutive year (CHE, 2018b, 2019a). The retention rate **decreased** for the remaining institutions, but only slightly for The Citadel (0.7 percent) and Winthrop (0.9 percent). However, retention efforts often cost in time and money to students, institutions, and the government (Simpson, 2005). Students who transfer to another school or drop out after freshmen year can negatively impact the institution's retention rate, one of the legitimate metrics related to the success of an institution's performance, as well as to their fiscal operations. Ultimately, institutions are interested in practices that increase student success, cover costs, and provide a financial return. On the other hand, from the perspective of students and parents, retention rates are indicators of satisfaction with the school, academic and personal support, and the potential return on investment in attending a particular institution.

Again, half of the public senior institutions experienced an overall lower retention rate from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. Three institutions (Lander, South Carolina State, and USC Upstate) indicate an increase in the retention rate among students not meeting the requirements. This is two more institutions than Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a). The remaining institutions (The Citadel, USC Aiken, and Winthrop) demonstrate a lower retention rate among this subgroup with the rate of The Citadel experiencing the highest decline (-11.2 percent) followed by Winthrop (-8.2 percent). Only Clemson and Francis Marion experienced an increase in retention among students meeting and not meeting the college preparatory requirements.

On average, there was only a 3.3 percent difference in retention rates for students meeting the prerequisites compared to those not meeting the prerequisites, a decrease from the 5.2 percent difference in 2017 and a step in the right direction (CHE, 2019a).

Table 3C
Fall 2017 First-Time Freshmen Not Meeting High School Prerequisites Retained at Same Institution in Fall 2018
S.C. Public Senior Institutions

Institution			Applicable Freshmen Meeting Prerequisites			Applicable Freshmen Not Meeting Prerequisites		
Research Institutions	Applicable Freshmen	Total Retention Fall 2018	Number	Retained	Percentage	Number	Retained	Percentage
Clemson	3,649	93.3%	3,245	3,034	93.5%	404	370	91.6%
USC Columbia	5,880	87.0%	4,575	3,989	87.2%	1,305	1,129	86.5%
Total	9,529	90.2%	7,820	7,023	90.3%	1,709	1,499	89.0%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities								
The Citadel	687	83.4%	648	546	84.3%	39	27	69.2%
Coastal Carolina	2,346	68.8%	2,230	1,549	69.5%	116	66	56.9%
College of Charleston	1,832	79.1%	1,776	1,406	79.2%	56	43	76.8%
Francis Marion	688	67.0%	653	439	67.2%	35	22	62.9%
Lander University	750	63.1%	692	441	63.7%	58	32	55.2%
SC State	591	61.1%	585	356	60.9%	6	5	83.3%
USC Aiken	573	62.5%	495	313	63.2%	78	45	57.7%
USC Beaufort	487	62.4%	397	255	64.2%	90	49	54.4%
USC Upstate	879	63.6%	741	477	64.4%	138	82	59.4%
Winthrop	1,039	74.6%	933	708	75.9%	106	67	63.2%
Total	9,872	68.6%	9,150	6,490	69.2%	722	438	63.9%
Grand Total	19,401	79.4%	16,970	13,513	79.8%	2,431	1,937	76.5%

Part III: Fall 2018 SAT and ACT Scores

The *Annual Report on Admission Standards* highlights scores from the average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) assessments for all first-time entering freshmen as indicators of academic preparation and college readiness. In Fall 2018, slightly more students attending South Carolina public senior institutions report taking the SAT (9,486 students) than the ACT (9,218 students) as a college entrance examination, contradicting the pattern in Fall 2016 and 2017, but congruent with Fall 2015 (CHE, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b). The percentage of first-time freshmen to take both the SAT and ACT is 5.2 (1,052 students), slightly over a one (1.0) percent **increase** from Fall 2017 (CHE, 2019a), and 1.1 percent (224 students) did not take either assessment.

In previous reports on admission standards of South Carolina public senior institutions, the scores of students who reported only ACT scores were converted to SAT equivalencies using the ACT-SAT concordance tables developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and The College Board in previous reports (The College Board, 2015b; CHE 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). The converted scores were then averaged with the SAT scores to construct an SAT/ACT combined mean. When ACT scores were converted into SAT equivalencies and combined into the mean, the SAT/ACT combined mean was slightly lower than the SAT combined mean excluding ACT scores (except for the research institutions).

In general, the combined SAT/ACT mean was lower because more than one SAT combined score (verbal and math) converts into the same ACT score, whereas only one ACT composite score converts to an SAT combined score except at the lowest end of the range. Depending on the range within students' scores fall (including ACT/SAT equivalencies in the calculation of the mean), a student's score could either increase or decrease the combined mean at that institution (The College Board, 2015c). The SAT was redesigned in 2015 (introduced in 2016) to better prepare students for success in all aspects of life, including college and careers (The College Board, 2015c). The major differences are in format and scoring. The old SAT had three sections: 1) Critical Reading, 2) Mathematics, and 3) Writing (scores not always factored into admissions) reporting on a scale ranging from 400 – 1600. The redesigned (new) SAT reports a total score that is the sum of two section scores: 1) Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and 2) Math. The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section is the sum of the Reading Test score and the Writing and Language Test score multiplied by 10. Each of the two section scores is reported on a scale ranging from 200 to 800. Thus, the total score remains on a scale ranging from 400 to 1600, but the scores for the Essay component are reported separately and not factored into the total score. The changes were made effective for those entering in college in Fall 2017.

In preparation for the Fall 2018 iteration of the *Annual Report on Admissions Standards for First-Time Freshmen*, Commission staff briefed ACAP (2019) members on a potential amendment to the inclusion of the SAT/ACT combined mean. The discussion focused on the changes in college entrance examination preference among first-time freshmen entering SC public senior institutions over the last several years. As previously stated, prior to and including Fall 2015, the majority of students attending SC public senior institutions reported taking the SAT rather than the ACT as a college entrance examination (CHE, 2017). However, in Fall 2016 and 2017, the majority of students attending SC public senior institutions reported taking the ACT rather than the SAT (CHE, 2018a, 2018b). The number of first-time freshmen taking the ACT or SAT are approximately the same in Fall 2018 (2019a). In addition, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) (2020) now offers either assessment at no cost to eleventh grade high school students. The institutions were asked to provide written feedback addressing 1) the benefit, if any, to include the SAT/ACT combined mean in the report; 2) whether the report should continue to include the SAT/ACT combined mean but also report; and 3) whether it was more appropriate to report ACT and SAT separately. Institutions expressed concern about the SAT/ACT combined mean due to changes each individual assessment over the last few years which present challenges in comparing assessment scores. Ultimately, it was decided to amend the *Annual Report on Admissions Standards* to present SAT and ACT mean scores separately rather than combined.

For this report, analysis is based on the national and state overall mean SAT and ACT scores for 2018 college-bound seniors, including any redesigned test structures. Nationally, the average mean SAT scores are 1068 without the essay section and 1096 with the essay section, representing an increase of eight (8) and six (6) points, respectively (The College Board, 2017, 2018a). The overall mean scores for South Carolina are 1070 without the essay and 1107 with the essay (The College Board, 2018b). Nationally, the average ACT mean score is 20.8 (ACT, 2018). The state level overall ACT mean score is 18.3 for the 2018 graduating class, ranking second to the lowest among comparable states where the same or similar percentages of graduates were tested.

The South Carolina institutions in which students seek admission vary in whether the essay section/score is required and/or factored into admission decisions (CHE, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). **Table 4** (p. 29) details the following for Fall 2018 first-time freshmen attending public senior institutions in South Carolina by sector: 1) combined mean for SAT scores, and 2) percentage of students reporting SAT scores only, 3) ACT mean, and 4) percentage of students reporting ACT scores. Clemson indicated the highest average SAT (1308) combined mean and ACT mean (29.4), followed by USC Columbia with

average scores of 1275 and 27.8, respectively. In comparison to the Fall 2017 *Annual Report on Admission Standards*, both institutions increased the SAT combined mean scores (CHE, 2019a). Clemson experienced a 6-point increase. USC Columbia had an increase of 20 points. South Carolina State University indicated a notable increase of 24 points in the SAT combined mean (943) (CHE, 2019a). South Carolina State also indicated an increase in the percentage of students reporting an ACT score from 68.2 percent in Fall 2017 to 73.9 percent in Fall 2018,

In comparing the overall national ACT mean to the ACT means of the South Carolina senior public institutions, the average score of six institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, and Winthrop) exceeds the national average. The ACT means of Clemson and USC Columbia exceed the state average of 24.8, and the ACT mean of the College of Charleston equal the state average. Of the remaining institutions, Lander, USC Aiken, and USC Beaufort are only slightly below the national average at 20.5, 20.1, and 20.0, respectively.

In comparing the overall national SAT combined mean with the SAT combined means of the South Carolina senior public institutions, the essay section has no influence on how the results of each institution are viewed. Based on the 2017 *Admission Standards* annual report, the public senior institutions did not factor the writing component into Fall 2018 admissions (CHE, 2019a). Clemson, USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, and College of Charleston used the essay component as supplemental information, if provided.

The SAT scores reported by each public senior institution do not include the essay score. In comparing the overall national combined mean, without the essay, to the SAT combined means of the South Carolina senior public institutions, the average score of five institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, and College of Charleston) exceeds the national average. The same five institutions exceeded the national, and state average, in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 (CHE, 2018b, 2019a). Again, only the SAT combined means of Clemson and USC Columbia exceed the state average of 1176, an increase of 10 points from Fall 2017.

TABLE 4 SAT/ACT SCORES OF FIRST-TIME ENTERING FRESHMEN, FALL 2018 (Including Foreign and Provisional Students and Students Age 22 and Above) S.C. Public Senior Institutions and USC Two-Year Campuses				
Institutions	SAT (Only) Mean Including Foreign, Prov. & Age 22 & Above	% Reporting SAT Score Including Foreign, Prov. & Age 22 & Above	ACT (Only) Combined Mean¹ Including Foreign, Prov. & Age 22 & Above	% Reporting ACT Score Including Foreign, Prov. & Age 22 & Above
Research Institutions				
Clemson	1308	50.2%	29.4	49.8%
USC-Columbia	1275	50.3%	27.8	49.3%
Average Research Institutions	1288	50.3%	28.4	49.5%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities				
The Citadel	1130	59.9%	23.1	39.5%
Coastal Carolina	1102	44.2%	21.8	49.7%
College of Charleston	1170	54.3%	24.9	47.2%
Francis Marion University	1030	53.8%	19.2	77.4%
Lander University	1051	62.5%	20.5	36.8%
S.C. State University	943	45.5%	17.1	73.9%
USC-Aiken	1051	72.1%	20.1	63.6%
USC-Beaufort	1025	64.6%	20.0	64.4%
USC-Upstate	1016	64.1%	19.5	68.3%
Winthrop	1062	55.6%	22.8	44.1%
Average Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	1081	55.0%	21.3	53.2%
Average Senior Institutions	1176	52.7%	24.8	51.4%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC				
USC-Lancaster	1004	60.3%	18.6	58.2%
USC-Salkehatchie	915	35.8%	15.9	71.2%
USC-Sumter	1049	45.9%	18.1	65.5%
USC-Union	933	42.9%	16.2	68.4%
Average USC Two-Year	986	47.3%	17.3	65.2%

¹ Changes to the implementation and scoring of the SAT were made effective in 2017 (College Board, 2017).

A comparison of the change in average ACT means demonstrates a fluctuation at several institutions over the last five years (**Table 4A**, p. 30). Half of the public senior institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, College of Charleston, South Carolina State, USC Beaufort, and Winthrop) indicate an **increase** in the average ACT mean from 2017 to 2018. USC Columbia demonstrates the largest increase of 0.5 points. Francis Marion and Lander indicate the largest decrease of -0.5 points. The average ACT mean for public senior institutions in South Carolina remained the same at 24.6 from 2017 to 2018 with a 0.1-point increase from 2014 to 2018.

TABLE 4A ACT Scores of First-Time Entering Freshmen (Including Foreign, Provisional, and Students Age 22 and Above) S.C. Public Senior Institutions and USC Two-Year Campuses							
Institutions	2014 ACT Mean	2015 ACT Mean	2016 ACT Mean	2017 ACT Mean	2018 ACT Mean	2017-2018 Change Mean	2014-2018 Change Mean
Research Institutions							
Clemson	28.4	28.5	28.4	29.2	29.4	0.2	1.0
USC-Columbia	27.1	27.3	27.7	27.3	27.8	0.5	0.7
Average Research Institutions	27.7	27.8	28.0	28.0	28.4	0.4	0.7
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities							
The Citadel	23.1	23.3	22.7	23.3	23.1	-0.2	0.0
Coastal Carolina	21.3	22.2	22.4	22.1	21.7	-0.4	0.4
College of Charleston	25.2	25.2	24.4	24.7	24.9	0.2	-0.3
Francis Marion	19.4	20.1	19.8	19.7	19.2	-0.5	-0.2
Lander	21.0	21.2	20.9	21.0	20.5	-0.5	-0.5
S.C. State	16.5	15.7	16.0	16.8	17.1	0.3	0.6
USC-Aiken	21.1	20.8	21.4	20.4	20.0	-0.4	-1.1
USC-Beaufort	20.0	19.9	20.5	19.8	20.0	0.2	0.0
USC-Upstate	21.0	20.7	20.7	19.7	19.5	-0.2	-1.5
Winthrop	22.7	22.9	22.7	22.2	22.8	0.6	0.1
Average Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	21.7	22.1	21.7	21.5	21.3	-0.2	-0.4
Average Senior Institutions	24.7	24.9	24.8	24.7	24.8	0.1	0.1
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC							
USC-Lancaster	18.0	18.4	18.5	18.2	18.6	0.4	0.6
USC-Salkehatchie	16.0	16.4	18.7	16.0	15.9	-0.1	-0.1
USC-Sumter	19.7	19.0	19.4	18.6	18.1	-0.5	-1.6
USC-Union	15.9	15.9	15.6	17.0	16.1	-0.9	0.2
Average Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC	17.5	17.6	18.8	17.5	17.3	-0.2	-0.2

Table 4B (p. 31) compares the SAT combined mean for each institution for the most recent five years. The average combined SAT mean is 1176. All institutions except two indicate an **increase** in the average combined SAT mean between 2017 and 2018. Francis Marion and Winthrop experienced a **decrease** of 14 points and 25 points, respectively. Again, South Carolina State indicated the largest increase of 24 points followed by USC Columbia and USC Aiken, both increasing the combined SAT mean 20 points.

When comparing the change in combined mean from 2014 to 2018, all public senior institutions indicate an **increase** in the average combined SAT mean. USC Columbia demonstrates the largest increase of 265 points. Winthrop demonstrates the lowest increase from 2014 to 2018 of 7 points. Since 2016, Winthrop is also the only institution with a combined SAT mean remaining relatively stable. The average combined SAT mean for public senior institutions in South Carolina increased by 10 points from 2017 to 2018 and by 65 points from 2014 to 2018. The change in combined SAT mean from 2017 to 2018 for four public senior institutions (USC Columbia, Lander, South Carolina State, and USC Aiken) exceeded the average change in combined SAT mean for all public senior institutions. For seven of twelve public senior institutions (USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken,

and USC Beaufort), the change in combined SAT mean from 2017 to 2018 met or exceeded the average change in combined SAT mean for all public senior institutions.

TABLE 4B SAT Scores of First-Time Entering Freshmen¹ (Including Foreign, Provisional, and Students Age 22 and Above) S.C. Public Senior Institutions and USC Two-Year Campuses							
Institutions	2014 SAT Combined Mean	2015 SAT Combined Mean	2016 SAT Combined Mean	2017 SAT Combined Mean¹	2018 SAT Combined Mean	2017-18 Change Combined Mean	2014-18 Change Combined Mean
Research Institutions							
Clemson	1252	1251	1243	1302	1308	6	56
USC-Columbia	1010	1209	1215	1255	1275	20	265
Average Research Institutions	1227	1225	1226	1273	1288	15	61
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities							
The Citadel	1091	1084	1066	1121	1130	9	39
Coastal Carolina	1001	1005	1019	1093	1102	9	101
College of Charleston	1130	1119	1098	1161	1170	9	40
Francis Marion	960	958	956	1044	1030	-14	70
Lander	982	971	997	1036	1051	15	69
S.C. State	826	770	784	919	943	24	117
USC-Aiken	986	991	973	1031	1051	20	65
USC-Beaufort	947	924	934	1023	1025	2	78
USC-Upstate	959	949	956	1014	1016	2	57
Winthrop	1055	1024	1032	1087	1062	-25	7
Average Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	1017	1010	1016	1073	1081	8	64
Average Senior Institutions	1111	1107	1113	1166	1176	10	65
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC							
USC-Lancaster	899	892	879	1019	1004	-15	105
USC-Salkehatchie	836	820	1023	905	915	10	79
USC-Sumter	951	924	922	1024	1049	25	98
USC-Union	814	722		884	933	49	119
Average USC Two-Year	823	859	900	983	986	3	163

¹ Changes to the implementation and scoring of the SAT were made effective in 2017 (College Board, 2017).

Part IV: Fall 2018 Provisionally Admitted Students

An institution may offer two types of admission to a degree-seeking student. Applicants who meet the institution's minimum admission criteria and who are offered admission are classified as regular students. Applicants who do not meet the institution's regular admission requirements but who are offered admission using alternative criteria are classified as provisional students.

Table 5 shows provisional freshmen as a percent of total first-time entering freshmen in Fall 2018 for each public senior institution and the USC two-year regional campuses. Among the public senior institutions, six indicated admitting "provisional" students, yet all, again, have first-time freshmen not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites. The number of institutions indicating the admission of provisional students **decreased** from eight in Fall 2017 to six in Fall 2018 (CHE, 2019a). All but one institution, USC Columbia, reporting provisional students, were comprehensive teaching colleges and universities. The data suggests College of Charleston admitted the largest percentage of provisional first-time freshmen (19.7 percent), but a decrease of 13.3 percent from 2017 (CHE, 2019a). USC Aiken followed College of Charleston with a percentage of 9.7, an increase from 7.5 percent provisional students in 2017. USC Columbia, South Carolina State, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate also decreased the percentage of provisional freshmen admitted. Winthrop decreased from admitting 8.4 percent of provisional students in 2017 to none in 2018. Again, Clemson, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, Francis Marion, and Lander do not report admitting any provisional first-time freshmen.

Table 5 Provisional Freshmen as a Percent of Total First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2018 S.C. Public Senior Institutions and USC Two-Year Regional Campuses			
Institution	Total First-Time Freshmen	Provisional First-Time Freshmen	Percent Provisional
Research Institutions			
Clemson	3,789	0	0.0%
USC Columbia	5,854	75	1.3%
Total	9,643	75	0.8%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities			
The Citadel	703	0	0.0%
Coastal Carolina	2,329	0	0.0%
College of Charleston	2,199	144	19.7%
Francis Marion	731	0	0.0%
Lander	870	0	0.0%
S.C. State	541	30	5.5%
USC Aiken	549	40	9.7%
USC Beaufort	413	38	3.8%
USC Upstate	1,011	49	4.9%
Winthrop	991	0	0.0%
Total	10,337	301	1.5%
Total Senior Institutions	19,980	376	1.9%
USC Two-Year Regional Campuses			
USC Lancaster	325	0	0.0%
USC Salkehatchie	271	0	0.0%
USC Sumter	255	0	0.0%
USC Union	177	0	0.0%
Total USC Two-Year	1,028	0	0.0%
Grand Total	21,008	376	1.8%

Regarding provisional students, at a meeting on August 25, 1997, the Commission approved several recommendations for the institutions to consider (CHE 2012, 2014, 2017). Among these recommendations were two related to the data presented in **Table 5** (p. 32):

- Research universities should limit provisional admissions to no more than 10 percent of the first-time entering freshman class.
- Four-year comprehensive teaching colleges and universities should limit provisional admissions to no more than 15 percent of the first-time entering freshman class.

As evident by reviewing the data presented in Table 5A, all public senior institutions have adhered to the recommendations, except for the 2018 anomaly for the College of Charleston. Trend data for provisional admissions for the last six years for the public senior institutions is provided below in **Table 5A**.

Table 5A Provisional Freshmen as a Percent of Total First-Time Freshmen S.C. Public Senior Institutions						
Institution	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Research Institutions						
Clemson	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
USC Columbia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	1.3%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities						
The Citadel	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coastal Carolina	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
College of Charleston	10.1%	10.4%	6.8%	11.1%	6.4%	19.7%
Francis Marion	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Lander	3.5%	5.4%	4.1%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
S.C. State	7.1%	11.1%	13.0%	4.5%	1.0%	5.5%
USC Aiken	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.8%	9.7%
USC Beaufort	2.0%	2.5%	1.7%	0.0%	2.7%	3.8%
USC Upstate	0.0%	5.9%	6.8%	0.0%	6.7%	4.9%
Winthrop	12.2%	9.1%	11.9%	12.0%	0.9%	0.0%
USC Two-Year Regional Campuses						
Average Percentage of All Campuses	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The data indicate that the percentage of provisional students admitted to the comprehensive sector continues to fluctuate at several institutions over the last six years. As of this report, USC Columbia, College of Charleston, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, and USC Beaufort **increased** the percentage of provisional first-time freshmen by a range of 1.3 percent to 19.7 percent. College of Charleston **increased** the number of provisionally admitted first-time freshmen from 6.4 percent, the third largest percentage among SC public senior institutions in 2017, to the largest percentage in 2018 (19.7 percent), a substantial difference. USC Upstate and Winthrop admitted a smaller number of provisional students in 2018.

The University of South Carolina System consists of the Research 1 campus (USC Columbia), three comprehensive institutions that are separately funded and accredited (USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate), as well as four two-year regional campuses (USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter, and USC Union). It is important to note that, prior to the implementation of the Banner enterprise system in fall 2013, when students applied to a regional campus, the application was compared to USC Columbia's admission standards. If the student was eligible for admission to Columbia

yet desired admission to a specific regional campus, the student was classified as “baccalaureate-ready”, indicating they were a USC Columbia-admissible student.

Students admitted to a regional (two-year) campus must earn a minimum 2.0 GPA and at least 30 hours to be able to change campuses to Columbia for most programs of study. Some may have higher GPAs and/or specific course requirements. USC reported that regional campuses do not provide remediation and the procedural change explains the large reduction in the number of first-time entering freshmen classified as provisional students for the USC two-year campuses over the past six years to non-existence (CHE, 2018b).

Part V: Fall 2017 Minimum Admission Standards

A component of Act 629 of 1988 requires the Commission to work with public institutions of higher learning in South Carolina to ensure minimal admission standards are maintained by each institution. The publication and dissemination of minimal admission standards was recommended by external consultants who argued that unless students have a clear sense of institutional expectations, they could not rise to meet the expectations. In 1988, each institution was required to specify annually the minimum required SAT score (combined math and verbal) for admission as freshmen. In 1993, the Commission approved the collection of additional data to include minimum ACT scores if submitted in lieu of SAT scores.

It is important to note minimum admission standards are approximate. Some institutions apply a predictive equation to determine admission. At such institutions, the minimum required scores will vary depending on the value and weight of the other elements in the admissions formula. For this reason, the minimum SAT and ACT scores reported by the institutions as required for admission are to be used as guideposts for students aspiring to admission to any given institution.

Institutions continue to adjust admission requirements for first-time entering freshmen. Year after year, institutions report transitioning from the use of class rank to set the approximate minimum SAT/ACT scores to the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the core high school college preparatory curriculum. To more accurately report the approximate minimum SAT/ACT score for institutions, the Commission requests information on which method institutions apply to set the minimum score and presents the results in this report. The required minimum SAT/ACT scores are, generally, lower for students with a higher GPA and high school class rank at most institutions.

The data are separated into two tables indicating institutions that use class rank (**Table 6**, p. 35 and/or core GPA (**Table 7**, p. 36) to set the approximate minimum SAT/ACT score. Three institutions (Clemson, Francis Marion, and South Carolina State) report the **application of both methods**, two fewer institutions than in 2017 (CHE, 2019a). USC Beaufort, again, did not report any minimum SAT/ACT scores for high school class rank and GPA. USC Aiken and USC Upstate now report utilizing only class rank. Four other institutions, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Lander, and Winthrop, the same as in 2017, report utilizing only the core GPA.

Table 6 shows the approximate SAT and ACT score requirements reported by institution **using class rank** in Fall 2019. Three institutions (The Citadel, South Carolina State, and USC Aiken) require the same minimum SAT/ACT scores for students regardless of high school class rank. This is the same institutions as in 2018. Clemson increased the required SAT scores for students ranked in both the top 20 (1120 to 1140) and 50 (1370 to 1390) percent of their class. Francis Marion decreased the ACT requirement for students ranked in the top 50 percent of their class from 17 to 16.

Table 6 Admission Requirements Approximate Minimum SAT Score (Combined) and Minimum ACT Score Requirements for First-Time Entering Freshmen by High School Class Rank 2019								
Institution	High School Class Rank and Minimum SAT/ACT Scored						Predictive Equation ¹	
	Top 20% of Class		Top 50% of Class		Top 80% of Class			
	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	Yes	No
Research Institutions								
Clemson	1140	23	1390	30	1590	36	X	
USC Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities								
The Citadel	950	20	950	20	950	20		X
Coastal Carolina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
College of Charleston ²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Francis Marion	860	16	880	16	940	18	X	
Lander	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
S.C. State	910	17	910	17	910	17		X
USC Aiken	800	17	800	17	N/A	N/A	X	
USC Beaufort	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Upstate	930	18	980	19	980	19	X	
Winthrop	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC								
USC Lancaster	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Salkehatchie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Sumter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Union	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

¹ Some institutions use predictive equations, a formula combining high school class rank, high school grade point ratio, and SAT or ACT score, to determine which students to admit. At these institutions, the minimum required score will vary depending on the value and weight of the other elements in the formula.

² Students in the top 10% of class from SC public and charter school students are offered admission. No test score minimums for public school students from pilot counties in top ten percent initiative program. Counties included for students applying in Fall 2018 included Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Dorchester, Orangeburg, Williamsburg. Cougar Advantage program has now expanded state-wide and applies to SC public and charter school students entering Fall 2020 and beyond.

" - " means not applicable.

Table 7 shows the approximate SAT and ACT score requirements reported by institution **using core GPA** in Fall 2019. Two institutions, Lander and South Carolina State, require the **same** minimum SAT/ACT scores for entering students regardless of GPA. The SAT and ACT score requirements remained the same at both Lander and South Carolina State as in Fall 2018 (CHE, 2019). However, several institutions amended the SAT and ACT score requirements. Clemson decreased the SAT requirements for students with a core 2.0 GPA and increased the SAT requirements for those with a core 3.0 and 4.0 GPA. Coastal Carolina increased both the SAT and ACT requirements for students with a core 2.0 GPA but decreased both the SAT and ACT requirements for those with a core 3.0 GPA. College of Charleston added SAT and ACT score requirements for students with a core 3.0 GPA. Francis Marion increased both the SAT and ACT score requirements for students with a core 2.0 GPA as well as the SAT score requirement for those with a core 3.0 GPA. Winthrop **decreased** the minimum SAT and ACT required score for students entering in Fall 2019. Clemson is now the only institution that accepts a lower SAT and ACT score when accompanied by a higher GPA.

Table 7 Admission Requirements Approximate Minimum SAT Score (Combined) and Minimum ACT Score Requirements for First-Time Entering Freshmen by GPA 2019								
Institution	High School Core GPA and Minimum SAT/ACT Score						Predictive Equation ¹	
	Core GPA 2.0		Core GPA 3.0		Core GPA 4.0			
	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	Yes	No
Research Institutions								
Clemson	1590	36	1350	29	1050	21	X	
USC Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities								
The Citadel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coastal Carolina	1100	22	940	18	940	18		X
College of Charleston ²	*	*	1200	25	1100	22	-	-
Francis Marion	1160	24	880	16	860	16	X	
Lander	-	-	900	17	900	17	X	
S.C. State	910	17	910	17	910	17		X
USC Aiken	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Beaufort	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Upstate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Winthrop University	-	-	830	17	830	17		X
USC Two-Year Regional Campuses								
USC Lancaster	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Salkehatchie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Sumter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USC Union	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

¹ Some institutions use predictive equations, a formula combining high school class rank, high school grade point ratio, and SAT or ACT score, to determine which students to admit. At these institutions, the minimum required score will vary depending on the value and weight of the other elements in the formula.

² Core GPA 3.6 corresponds to SAT 1200 and ACT 25. .

" - " means not applicable.

" * " means a new freshman applicant who has a high school GPA 2.3 or below may be presented to the Admissions, Advising, and Retention

Committee for possible admittance if they have an SAT of at least 1080 or an ACT of at least 22.

In 2005, a mandatory writing/essay section was added to the SAT, creating three SAT scores (Critical Reading, Math, and Writing) on a scale of 200 - 800 each and amending the total perfect score to 2400 (The College Board, 2015). However, the essay became optional and scored separately with the SAT reverting to a maximum combined score of 1600, following an update in 2014. Since the redesign of the SAT in 2015, the essay component remains reported separately and not factored into the total score. As a result, considerations to include the SAT essay component as an admission requirement have continued to change. **Table 8** shows that over a decade later, in Fall 2019, SC public senior institutions **no longer** consider the essay component of the SAT in admission decisions. For students entering in Fall 2018, no public senior institution required the SAT writing component and used it as a factor in admission decisions (CHE, 2019). College of Charleston is now the only institution that utilizes the essay component as supplemental information in evaluating college readiness in combination with other qualitative and quantitative student assessments.

Table 8		
Requirement of SAT Essay Component for Admissions in Fall 2019		
Institution	Yes/No	Additional Information
Research Institutions		
Clemson	No	
USC Columbia	No	
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities		
The Citadel	No	
Coastal Carolina	No	
College of Charleston	No	The College of Charleston does not require that freshmen applicants submit the writing section of either the SAT or the ACT, although submission of a writing test score is highly recommended. When submitting, the writing score is considered as another source of information in evaluating the academic readiness of the student and is considered in combination with other qualitative and quantitative factors.
Francis Marion	No	
Lander	No	
S.C. State	No	
USC Aiken	No	
USC Beaufort	No	
USC Upstate	No	
Winthrop	No	

First-time freshmen can also comprise adults attending college for the first time or embarking on a career change. Full-time undergraduate students 25 years of age or older are generally referred to as “nontraditional” students (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Nontraditional students make up a significant proportion of full-time undergraduate students. In Fall 2015, students 25 years of age or older and enrolled in degree-granting public 4-year and 2-year postsecondary institutions comprised 11 and 23 percent, respectively, of full-time undergraduates (McFarland et al., 2017). Nontraditional students are unique in more characteristics than just age. They often are employed full-time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled; financially independent as it relates to financial aid eligibility; responsible for dependents, including spouse, children, and/or sick or elderly family members; and/or single parents (not married or married, but separated) (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Thus, family and work responsibilities influence their time, energy, and financial resources while pursuing postsecondary education.

Nontraditional students, also known as “adult learners”, present a unique opportunity to increase degree attainment in South Carolina and other states. Many states have set statewide higher education degree attainment goals to increase the educational levels of the adult population which are also aligned to address the workforce needs of the state (Lumina Foundation [Lumina], 2019). Adult learners have been identified as a priority population in strategic postsecondary plans and can be classified in several subgroups (Lumina, 2017). For the purpose of this report, three subgroups are highlighted: 1) adult learners with no education beyond high school, 2) near-completers, and 3) midlife career changers.

The first subgroup, adult learners with no more than a high school diploma, represent 63.8 million Americans between 25 and 64 years of age and are the most underserved population (Lumina, 2017). Other characteristics that define this subgroup of nontraditional students include being 1) disproportionately poor and from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, 2) incarcerated, 3) recent immigrants with low levels of education and limited English-speaking skills, and 4) displaced workers from middle-class jobs that lack middle- and higher-level skills, and as a result face enormous difficulty finding jobs that offer the income and benefits they previously possessed. Lumina emphasizes a focus on equity is required to provide meaningful postsecondary opportunities to this subgroup of adult learners.

“Near-completers” are the second category of nontraditional students. Often an overlooked population, near-completers are former postsecondary students who attained some college credit but did not earn a credential. As of 2019, 36 million adults in the United States have some college but no degree (Shapiro et al., 2019). Near-completers in South Carolina, 447,228 adults, represent approximately 1.2 percent of the national population with some college, but no degree. Near-completers have “stopped out” or “dropped out” of postsecondary education for a variety of reasons, including affordability, schedule inflexibility, and life circumstances (Anderson, 2017). They can be further divided into two additional subgroups: 1) eligible and 2) potential (Murphy, 2018). “Eligible” near-completers have met postsecondary academic requirements but failed to complete an administrative process such as filing for graduation, returning an overdue library book, or paying outstanding student fees, including nominal but legitimate fees such as parking tickets. On the other hand, “potential” near-completers require fewer than 15 credit hours to degree completion or are short of completing a non-academic course requirement (i.e., a seminar). This population continues to lose out on significant labor market advantages associated with college credentials (Institute for Higher Education Policy [IHEP], 2011). However, the degrees awarded must provide skills that align with state workforce needs and opportunities (Abdul-Alim, 2011). If states, including South Carolina, truly desire to increase degree attainment and workforce goals, near-completers are “low-hanging fruit” that can increase the likelihood of moving the needle towards degree attainment goals in which few states have demonstrated any progress (Abdul-Alim, 2011; IHEP, 2011; Fain, 2019).

The third subgroup of nontraditional students is midlife career changers. Midlife career changers are adult learners that are employed but seek to explore new professional possibilities (Ivy, 2020). They are characterized as being overlooked for advancement and job enrichment or highly accomplished but no longer interested in advancing within their existing professions. Ultimately, midlife career changers want to identify a new profession in which they can utilize their personal, social, and professional capital.

How can institutions and other higher education stakeholders engage, or reengage, nontraditional students from enrollment through degree completion and beyond? Anderson (2017) asserts that communal effort, instead of individualized institutional strategy, is key. Experts advocate for state policy and initiatives that incorporate 1) gubernatorial leadership or support from a strong champion in the state; 2) institutional buy-in, involvement, and collaboration; 3) legislative policy alignment to assist with

institutional engagement and affordability; 4) statewide marketing outreach campaign; 5) connected data systems (longitudinal data systems) and utilization to help identify eligible students; 6) flexibility in offerings; and 7) social support services (Anderson, 2017; Donachie, 2017). Indiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee are three states leading efforts to engage nontraditional students (Anderson, 2017).

Table 9 shows the number of first-time freshmen aged 25 or older, or “nontraditional students”, in the South Carolina public senior institutions and USC Two-Year Regional Campuses for the past five years. Since 2013, the number of first-time entering freshmen aged 25 and older has steadily declined for both categories of institutions (CHE, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, the number of first-time freshmen 25 years of age or older **remained relatively the same** with less than a half percent increase. Again, the USC Two-Year Regional Campuses continue to admit a greater percentage of the non-traditional aged student population as in previous years. The Fall 2018 data definition of “first-time freshmen” for this subgroup continues to allow for students to be classified as first-time if the college credit or post-secondary award was earned prior to high school graduation, and/or they have credit for military service/training, any non-credit courses, the completion of tests/assessments, and life experience. This is consistent with the definition applied to other data tables in the report.

Table 9 Number of First-time Freshmen Aged 25 and Older by Year, Five-Year Comparison S.C. Public Senior Institutions and USC Two-Year Regional Campuses						
Institutions	Fall 2014¹	Fall 2015²	Fall 2016²	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Grand Total
Research Institutions						
Clemson	0	0	0	0	0	0
USC Columbia	0	3	1	1	0	5
Total	0	3	1	1	0	5
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities						
The Citadel	0	4	2	0	0	6
Coastal Carolina	3	3	2	4	1	13
College of Charleston	1	0	0	0	0	1
Francis Marion	4	2	0	2	2	10
Lander	0	1	0	1	0	2
South Carolina State	4	1	0	1	0	6
USC Aiken	0	1	3	0	1	5
USC Beaufort	2	2	3	2	1	10
USC Upstate	2	9	4	1	3	19
Winthrop	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total	16	23	15	11	9	74
Total Senior Institutions	16	26	16	12	9	79
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC						
USC Lancaster	11	5	8	7	3	34
USC Salkehatchie	10	15	6	7	11	49
USC Sumter	11	6	4	3	4	28
USC Union	16	3	0	3	6	25
Total USC Two-Year	48	29	18	20	24	139
Grand Total	144	136	84	73	75	512

¹ As reported in *Annual report on admission standards for first-time entering freshmen, Fall 2014* (CHE, 2017).

² As reported in *Annual report on admission standards for first-time entering freshmen, Fall 2015 and 2016* (CHE, 2018a and 2018b).

Conclusion

The *Annual Report on Admission Standards for First-Time Entering Freshman, Fall 2018* provides findings from data reported by 12 South Carolina public senior colleges and universities regarding admission standards. In Fall 2018, the public senior institutions admitting freshmen in South Carolina received 113,120 applications from individuals, both in-state and out-of-state, seeking admission as first-time freshmen. Of the first-time freshmen applicants, 62.1 percent (70,278) were offered admission, and 28.4 percent (19,980) of applicants offered admission accepted and enrolled. A slight increase in the number of applicants and those offered admission resulted in an increase of 501 enrollees from 2017 to 2018. This is a one and one-half percent decrease among the applicants offered admission, but a one-half percent increase among those that accepted and enrolled from Fall 2017. The majority of first-time freshmen attending South Carolina's 12 public senior institutions, in Fall 2018, are women (57.4 percent) and the Black/African American men and women composition of first-time freshmen remained relatively unchanged at 16.2 percent.

The number and percentage of applicable first-time freshmen meeting all the college preparatory course prerequisites rebounded modestly, after a slight decline from 2015 – 2017. In Fall 2018, 85.6 percent of first-time freshmen met all the prerequisites compared to 85.1 percent in 2017, and 88.7 percent in 2016. Data indicates that among the public senior institutions, the percentage of freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites slightly increased from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. Slightly more than Fall 2017, over half of the public institutions demonstrate decreases in freshmen who met high school course prerequisites in Fall 2018, while the remaining indicate an increase in freshmen who met high school course prerequisites. Retention rates among students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites remain lower for over half of the public senior institutions. Five institutions indicate an increase in freshmen-to-sophomore retention rates for students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites, while seven institutions demonstrate a decrease in retention rates for the same category of students.

Slightly more students attending South Carolina public senior institutions report taking the SAT (9,486 students) rather than the ACT (9,218 students) as a college entrance examination in Fall 2018, largely as a result of revisions to state college readiness exam administration policy. This is the first edition of the *Annual Report on Admission Standards* to include standalone ACT scores. In Fall 2018, the average ACT mean is 24.8. Half of the public senior institutions indicate an increase in the average ACT mean from 2017 to 2018. The average combined SAT mean is 1176. All but two public senior institutions indicate an increase in the average combined SAT mean.

An institution may offer two types of admission to a degree-seeking student, regular or provisional. The classification is based on whether the applicant meets the institution's minimum admission criteria. Among the public senior institutions, seven of the twelve indicated admitting "provisional" students, yet all have first-time freshmen not meeting the college preparatory course prerequisites. Most of the institutions reporting provisional students, again, were comprehensive teaching colleges and universities in South Carolina. Although the data indicate that the percentage of provisional students admitted to the comprehensive sector continues to fluctuate at several institutions, the levels for nearly all public senior institutions remain below the 15 percent threshold CHE formally recommended at a commission meeting in August 1997.

Institutions continue to adjust admission requirements for first-time entering freshmen. The required minimum SAT and ACT scores are, generally, lower for students with a higher GPA and high school class rank at most institutions. The minimum admission standards of the public senior institutions in South Carolina for Fall 2018 incorporate the use of both GPA and high school class rank. Institutions report intent to apply a variety of methods: both GPA and class rank, no minimum scores, the same minimum scores regardless of high school class rank, or regardless of GPA. In addition to SAT/ACT scores, class rank, and GPA, considerations to include the SAT essay component as an admission requirement are constantly changing. SC public senior institutions no longer consider the essay component of the SAT in admission decisions.

Future Opportunities

The 2018 *Annual Report on Admission Standards* reveals nontraditional students continue to remain an untapped market for public postsecondary education. The South Carolina economy maintains to have an influx of jobs with the addition of new companies across various sectors and workforce development remains a renewed focus and a statewide priority. However, business and industry continue to indicate the emerging and existing workforce is not prepared or equipped with the necessary skills for initial employment and advancement. Institutions of higher learning have an unprecedented opportunity to align recruitment strategies, training, programs, and degrees to the labor market, staying attuned and responsive to workforce needs. The development of multiple career pathways that span educational institutions (access and affordability) is necessary so that students and job seekers can seamlessly transition and progress through high-quality education and training to high-demand, high-wage employment (excellence).

In addition to the inclusion and analysis of more demographic data, future iterations of the *Annual Report on Admission Standards* may include an in-depth examination of trend data of the various subject areas highlighted in the report, and a common definition for provisional admission and a review of the admission limits is also an opportunity for development. Trend analysis allows for the assessment of patterns and changes over time, especially in student retention and persistence of underserved populations. The retention of all admitted students continues to be a topic that deserves more exploration.

Again, the pandemic's impact has created uncertainty for the length and scale of higher education's efforts at sustainability and recovery. More than ever, data-driven decision making, if successful, can generate collaborative opportunities that can translate research and theory into best practice. This report can serve to inform institutions and all stakeholders about gaps in our educational landscape and the support needed for all postsecondary students, but especially the underserved students, and can catalyze further research. Commission staff intend to explore other issues related to admission standards in higher education, with a goal to support increased student access and success, and enhance institutional effectiveness.

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